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## Book Review: Christopher Darnton. Rivalry and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America

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Introduction by Dustin Walcher

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## Introduction by Dustin Walcher, Southern Oregon University

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Transitions from rivalry to alliance within bilateral relationships have received considerable attention from historians of U.S. foreign relations. Or, more accurately, some alliances have received considerable attention; it remains unusual for works on inter-American relations to be cast principally as examinations of alliance politics. There are at least two interrelated reasons. First, the vast majority of the literature on the foreign relations of Latin American states analyzes cases where significant asymmetries of power exist. To be sure, vast differentials in political, economic, and military power can be found within alliances. But the alliance framework is more often applied to cases of countries where the imbalance is not dramatic. Second, in the English language literature in particular, relations between Latin American countries have been understudied. The overwhelming majority of the scholarship analyzes the role of great powers such as the United States or Great Britain. Consequently, the factors that have led regional adversaries to become allies have received less attention. U.S.-Latin American relations or Anglo-Latin American relations could, of course, be studied through the prism of rivalries and alliances, but the frameworks of empire and other varieties of hegemony have been more commonly utilized.

Embodying a larger and dynamic trend in the field, Christopher Darnton situates his book from the point of view of Latin American countries. *Rivalry and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America* examines the strategies and foreign policies of Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Chile; the United States, when it appears, serves as only a secondary actor. Consequently, interstate rivalries and alliances within Latin America serve as the fundamental subjects of analysis.

Darnton seeks to answer the question as to why some rivalries have transitioned into alliances whereas others have persisted, and answers with parochial-interest theory, which holds that the confluence of two factors, operating simultaneously, is required for two states to abandon their rivalry and form an alliance. First, both states must face significant resource constraints. Second, both states must be able to identify a new, common threat. Both conditions must be present in both states in order for reconciliation to occur.

Bureaucratic politics explain why the presence of both factors is imperative. The military, related security services, and foreign ministries require the existence of a clear rival (or rivals) to justify their budgets, and to some extent their existence. The emergence of a common adversary, absent significant resource constraints, permits leaders to conclude that they can afford multiple rivals. Similarly, resource constraints, absent a common adversary against which both sides can unite, incentivizes the military to emphasize the existing threat, or else risk severe budget cuts. A strong incentive to reconcile with the initial adversary and unite in opposition to a common threat occurs only in cases where that common security threat arises at the same time that budget constraints limit state actions. When either variable is lacking, it is in the narrow, bureaucratic interests of the security and foreign services to obstruct any potential rapprochement with a rival.

Darnton utilizes three case studies from Latin America between the 1940s and 1980s to establish his thesis: the Argentine-Brazilian relationship, the longstanding Central American rivalries, and the equally persistent Andean rivalries. He examines cases where reconciliation occurred and contrasts those with occasions when rapprochement was not achieved, often despite the concerted efforts of presidents. Of the three case studies, Darnton devotes the most space to the many false starts, and the path toward ultimate reconciliation, between Argentina and Brazil. Finally, he seeks to demonstrate the relevance of his theory for contemporary policymakers. To that end, the final substantive chapter examines the Algerian-Moroccan rivalry in the

contemporary Middle East through the lens of parochial-interest theory. He suggests that if the United States is serious about supporting reconciliation between the two adversaries, it must be prepared to restrict military assistance.

The reviewers offer somewhat mixed overall assessments of *Rivalry and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America*. Charles Jones is the most positive, declaring that “Darnton proves himself a better historian than the historians, less trusting of the published memoirs of participants and more assiduous in his scrutiny of archival materials.” He goes on to characterize the book as “exceptionally rigorous and closely argued,” and writes that it offers “a systematic and robust explanation with wide applicability.”

Michael Neagle provides a largely positive evaluation, but has questions and reservations. He praises Darnton for “mak[ing] a compelling case for parochial-interests theory, an argument greatly aided by the clarity in which he writes.” But Neagle finds that the “temporal and geographic shift is a bit jarring” as Darnton moves between the case studies. Neagle also suggests that “[a] deeper look into the countries [Darnton] considers could have strengthened his argument still the more.” Incorporating analysis of “sociocultural considerations,” Neagle argues, “may have helped to explain more fully why rivalries persist.” Neagle also asks whether the three case studies were the only ones of rapprochement during Cold War Latin America, or whether they simply fit Darnton’s model best.

Finally, although he “found much to admire in Darnton’s book,” Thomas Field offers a largely critical assessment. “I remain unconvinced that state agencies roguishly persist in pointless regional rivalries merely out of petty bureaucratic greed,” he writes, “and I doubt that heads of state should be unconditionally praised as ‘aspiring peacemakers’ for engaging in secret ‘end runs’ to sign away decades-long grievances in favor of new loyalties to U.S.-led counterinsurgency alliances.” Despite taking issue with Darnton’s central thesis, Field writes that it was “a great pleasure to review this impressive debut.”

While the reviewers dedicate the bulk of their attention to analyzing Darnton’s intriguing and provocative thesis, they take care to laud him for working to bridge the methodological gap separating historians from political scientists. Jones explains that the book “represents a courageous and welcome methodological rapprochement between political science and history through its close attention to detail and well-judged use of primary sources.” Whether or not readers find Darnton’s ultimate thesis convincing, his cross-disciplinary efforts should be appreciated and, hopefully, emulated. Those of us working in international affairs, broadly defined, have much to learn from colleagues in related disciplines. Not only does Darnton offer a thoughtful and considered explanation for the conditions under which adversaries may become allies, he also challenges disciplinary straightjackets. Not bad as first books go.

### Participants

**Christopher Darnton** is Associate Professor of Politics at the Catholic University of America. He is the author of *Rivalry and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America* (Johns Hopkins, 2014); his most recent article is “Whig History, Periodization, and International Cooperation in the Southern Cone” (*International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 58 No. 3, 2014). He holds a Ph.D. in Politics from Princeton University (2009). His current projects include articles on U.S.-Cuban rapprochement failures, Latin American agency in the Alliance for Progress, and the use and misuse of archival documents in political science, as well as a book on the sectional politics of war and state formation in the Americas.

**Dustin Walcher** is Associate Professor and Chair of History and Political Science at Southern Oregon University. A specialist in international history, the history of U.S. foreign relations, and inter-American affairs, his scholarship analyzes international economic policy, global capitalism, and social disruption. He is currently revising a manuscript that examines the link between the failure of U.S.-led economic initiatives and the rise of social revolution in Argentina during the 1950s and 1960s. With Jeffrey F. Taffet he is also completing a combined textbook and document reader on the history of U.S.-Latin American relations.

**Thomas C. Field Jr.** is Assistant Professor in the College of Security and Intelligence at Embry-Riddle University. He is the author of *From Development to Dictatorship: Bolivia and the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy Era* (Cornell University Press, 2014), which received the 2015 Thomas McGann Prize from the Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies. Field also received the 2013 Bernath Article Prize from the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations (SHAHR), for his *Diplomatic History* piece entitled “Ideology as Strategy,” and SHAHR’s 2011 Unterberger Dissertation Prize for his graduate work at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 2011, Field was the US and the Cold War Postdoctoral Fellow at New York University. He is currently working on an international history of Bolivia in the aftermath of the death of Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara.

**Charles Jones** recently retired from the directorship of the Centre of Latin American Studies at Cambridge University, where he had served as Reader in International Relations since 2000. His publications during that period included *American Civilization* (2007), *More Than Just War* (2013) and *International Relations: A Beginner’s Guide* (2014). He is currently working on *Radical Sisters*, a biographical study of the role of women and social movements in Victorian England.

**Michael E. Neagle** is an Assistant Professor of History at Nichols College in Dudley, Mass. His book manuscript, *The Forgotten Colony: Americans on Cuba’s Isle of Pines*, is under contract with Cambridge University Press. His work has appeared in *America in the World* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), *A Companion to Woodrow Wilson* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, and *Latino America: A State-By-State Encyclopedia* (Greenwood Press, 2008). He earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in History from the University of Connecticut, and his bachelor’s degree from the College of the Holy Cross.

**Review by Thomas C. Field Jr., Embry-Riddle University**

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As an international historian in an interdisciplinary program that is focused on international security, I found it a great pleasure to review this impressive debut by political scientist Christopher Darnton. His book reminds historians of the utility of engaging in contemporary debates, and he demonstrates a sincere desire to work alongside us, even borrowing from the historians' toolkit by scouring diplomatic archives, political memoirs, and historical press reports. Truer to his own discipline, Darnton retains a focus on constructing a policy-relevant theory of international politics, one that will be useful for diplomats who are interested in building more effective security alliances and in carrying out more efficient global counterinsurgency campaigns.

Like most international relations theorists, Darnton places a premium on conceptual parsimony. Security alliances are more effective, he argues, when intra-alliance rivalries are abandoned in favor of overall, global missions. According to Darnton, these disputes can best be resolved when rivals' perceptions of a common foe are coupled with economic constraints that force both states to put aside their differences in favor of alliance solidarity. The converse is also true: in the absence of economic constraints, rivals will be able to follow a dual mission, fighting the common enemy while continuing to engage in regional rivalries. His many case studies bear this out. So far so good.

Darnton then takes his theory a step further. According to his reading of primary documents from Cold War Latin America and beyond, the persistence of intra-alliance rivalries has little or nothing to do with actual grievances between states. Instead, rivalries are perpetuated because agencies of the state, foreign ministries and militaries, receive material benefits from ongoing regional competition. Viewing "the national interest through the prism of their parochial interest," state bureaucracies "systematically distort policymaking" by "torpedoing compromise attempts by leaders" (27, 30, 36). It is a bold assertion, one that Darnton has gone to great archival lengths to demonstrate. In the end, however, I remain unconvinced that state agencies roguishly persist in pointless regional rivalries merely out of petty bureaucratic greed, and I doubt that heads of state should be unconditionally praised as "aspiring peacemakers" for engaging in secret "end runs" to sign away decades-long grievances in favor of new loyalties to U.S.-led counterinsurgency alliances (75, 202). These caricatures are useful for theorizing, but they bear little resemblance to the rich complexity of the Latin American historical case studies Darnton explores. I will further discuss this point below.

Lest this review descend into a disciplinary squabble over the way comparative international relations theorists tend to flatten historical narratives, it is important to point out that I found much to admire in Darnton's book. Putting aside the internal mechanisms at play when states are convinced to overcome intra-alliance rivalries, it is reasonable to expect that this may indeed occur when rivals are faced with the dual conditions of a common foe and economic constraints. This leads Darnton to some surprising and useful conclusions. First, U.S. aid to allies can have the paradoxical effect of prolonging intra-alliance rivalries, as rival states see little economic reason to give up the advancement of regional foreign policy goals even as they double-down on the U.S.-led alliance. Second, U.S. diplomatic pressure on allies (against human rights violations, for example) can have the unexpected effect of pushing allied rivals toward rapprochement.

In both cases, Darnton's findings seem to recommend a controlled weakening of allied state bureaucracies through "aid denial or conditionality" (206) so that they will be forced to make "tough decisions and thus spur policy change" (43) away from regional rivalries. According to Darnton, "a limited amount of constraint can actually improve those countries' security situations," (205) at least in terms of the overarching U.S.-led

mission. Darnton does not put his explicit policy suggestions in these stark terms, of course, advocating for a decrease in military aid, a promotion of human rights (but not democracy), and a refusal to commit U.S. troops to aid allied security (202). But it is equally reasonable to conclude that his parochial-interest theory of intra-alliance rivalry calls for the U.S. to limit all forms of aid, military and economic, and to therefore enforce alliance unity through sticks rather than carrots. I wonder how things would turn out if policymakers heeded his advice, in Morocco and Algeria to use his example, by squeezing each state into abandoning their rivalry in favor of a combined U.S.-led (but not U.S.-funded) counterinsurgent campaign. It might work, but two alternative scenarios are possible: one or both states might fall to insurgents, or they could turn elsewhere for support, preferring to abandon their alliance with the U.S. rather than giving up on regional grievances. Neither of these results seems to be Darnton's intent, but a miserly hegemon is left with few alternatives (43, 202, 205-206).

As a historian, I must conclude with a brief word on the book's use of empirical historical data. Darnton's theory relies heavily on his Chapter-three case study of Argentina and Brazil, which takes up almost half of the total narrative section of the book. Like his other narrative forays, this chapter includes lengthy re-articulations of his parochial-interests theory, leaving Darnton with only short vignettes regarding a series of (mostly failed) presidential summits. Rather than mobilize the extensive, contextualized work of historians of Brazil and Argentina, like Ruth Leacock, Michael Weis, and David Sheinin, to name a few, Darnton disparages the existing (though uncited) literature as having "misinterpreted" failed attempts at rapprochement as having to do with factors aside from petty bureaucratic sabotage (81).<sup>1</sup> Even when Darnton cites historians such as Robert Potash, Stephen Rabe, and Greg Grandin, he leaves them out of his harsh historiographical critiques, which are restricted to the relatively easy targets of political memoirs. Having disposed of any debt to the existing literature, Darnton then rather boldly claims to have constructed a historically "revisionist explanation" of rivalry persistence, basing his parochial bureaucratic interest theory on a handful of documents and press reports through which he spent time "tracing torpedoes" allegedly launched by state agencies opposed to peacemaking efforts by heads of state (64, 71). Rather than dismissing decades of nuanced scholarship by historians of Cold War Latin America – also uncited are Walter Lafeber, Alan McPherson, and Hal Brands – Darnton could have utilized historians' findings, as he ably does in Chapter Four, the book's best, on Central America.<sup>2</sup> This would have enabled Darnton to employ his significant skills as a political scientist to do what theorists do best: trace continuities across a myriad of case studies, constructing theoretical explanations to make better sense of historians' dizzying array of isolated empirical findings.

I've gone and broken my promise not to engage in disciplinary squabbles, so I will close by commending Darnton on an engaging and thought-provoking book. Though I disagree with the minutiae of his parochial-

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Leacock, *Requiem for Revolution: The United States and Brazil, 1961-1969* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1990); Michael Weis, *Cold Warriors and Coups d'etat: Brazilian-American Relations, 1945-1964* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); and David Sheinin, *Argentina and the United States: An Alliance Contained* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Walter Lafeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States and Central America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993); Alan McPherson, *Yankee No!: Anti-Americanism in U.S.-Latin American Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

interest theory, and I even question the long-term utility of banishing intra-alliance rivalries, I share his interest in taking a closer look at the inner workings of foreign policymaking, particularly in Latin America.



**Review by Charles Jones, University of Cambridge**

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In this thorough and thought-provoking study, Christopher Darnton offers an unflinchingly domestic account of Latin American international relations during the Cold War: “parochial interests within states, not mistrust between them” (2) were decisive. Constraint of leaders derived not from the logic of anarchy but the machinations of bureaucracies (2). The central research question is under what conditions the presence of a common foe can induce rapprochement between rivals (46). The big idea at the heart of the book is that armed forces and foreign ministries garner resources and status from rivalry and may therefore try to frustrate attempts at rapprochement by political leaders (6). The surest way to get around this is to distract them from entrenched rivalries by finding new things for them to do, though this will prove effective only in the face of a common foe, and if resource constraints prevent them from simply adding the alternative mission to the existing fixation on rivalry (8-9). Heads of state will often try to outflank those who are obstructing them without direct confrontation, by an end run (a metaphor borrowed from American football). The central hypothesis is that a “combination of a common foe and state resource constraints will produce rapprochement between international rivals, while the absence of either of these will cause rivalry to continue” (50).

What is being tested is the extent to which an alliance against a common foe leads to rapprochement between confirmed rivals (11) and why some attempts at rapprochement fail while others succeed. For rivals to find themselves in alliance is not uncommon. Think only of Britain and France in the Crimea, or the U.S. and the USSR in the 1940s. Yet it might be objected that the severity of the shared threat is the key determinant here, and that Latin American alignment with the U.S. is being taken a little too seriously? How much of a “common foe” (6) was the USSR for Latin American republics? They did not confront the USSR in central Europe, and the extent to which Moscow drove domestic internal security threats rather than merely aggravated them is debatable, as Darnton is well aware (11). Anticipating this objection, he argues that new anti-Communist missions “only fully displaced [traditional rivalries] under conditions of local insurgency and macroeconomic distress” (50).

Alternative explanations are meticulously surveyed in chapter 2, and Darnton revisits them in subsequent chapters dealing with Argentine relations with Brazil, the impact of the 1959 Cuban revolution on relations between the Central American republics, and the consequences of the 1982 debt crisis for Andean rivalries. Of these, it is the first that stands out, occupying almost a third of the text; indeed, it might almost stand alone. Here, Darnton goes beyond the mere consistency of events with his theory (and the inadequacy of alternatives) to look at primary documents. By doing so he is able to expose multiple instances of bureaucratic sabotage and the vulnerability of those presidents whose end runs failed.

The 1961 summit meeting between Argentine President Arturo Frondizi and Brazilian President Jânio Quadros was a particularly interesting moment in Argentine relations with Brazil. By this time, following the Cuban revolution, the threat of Communism was starting to be taken very seriously, perhaps too seriously, throughout the Americas. Darnton argues, however, that neither the Argentine nor the Brazilian military establishment had yet fully committed to an anti-subversive stance, Frondizi having actually rebuffed repeated proposals from the military for greater emphasis on internal subversion. Besides, the economy of each nation was sufficiently buoyant for any shift to the new mission to be consistent with retention of the traditional maintenance of conventional military parity with its rival. Darnton chronicles, in considerable detail, military obstruction of presidential proposals for engagement with the new Cuban regime and neutralist resistance to U.S. intervention against it. Also clear from the primary sources are the attempts of both leaders to

circumvent state bureaucracies by communicating directly with each other and with wider publics. He again makes a convincing case for bureaucratic sabotage rather than presidential indiscretion as the reason for the failure of a further presidential meeting in 1972, this time between Argentine President Alejandro Agustin Lanusse and Brazilian President Emilio Garrastazu Médici. The gaffes in Lanusse's speech to which failure has often been attributed were more a pretext for halting progress towards a possible rapprochement than a direct cause. Here, and throughout the case studies, Darnton proves himself a better historian than the historians, less trusting of the published memoirs of participants and more assiduous in his scrutiny of archival materials. It may be objected that, having formed a theory, he knew what he was looking for; but so did some of the historians, after less scrupulous preparatory work.

The *bilhetes* or notes by which Brazilian President Quadros blithely announced policy through national radio in the 1960s may be taken as an extreme illustration of the wider tendency of Latin American presidents, impatient of legislative delay, to rule by decree. Perhaps Latin America is unusual, historically or even by comparison with other regions during the Cold War, in its combination of constitutionalism, well-formed bureaucracies, and relative presidential autonomy. Latin America also has a distinctive history of long-running militarised inter-state disputes, which seldom tip over into war but have clearly been important in justifying the resources allocated to diplomacy and military preparedness. Elsewhere or at other times, it may be objected, lack of developed bureaucracies, the happenstance of dynastic succession, or the unity of political and military authority in monarch or warlord may drain the theory of significance. This raises the question of the scope of Darnton's theory, a matter of particular interest to historians, which he addresses directly toward the end of the book. Has he chosen a region and a period that fits nicely with his theory, or is it more widely applicable? To meet such concerns Darnton devotes the last of his substantive chapters to the period following the Cold War. Here, the theory nicely accounts for the persistence of rivalry between Algeria and Morocco despite the common threat of militant political Islamism.

Darnton takes great care to draw a close analogy between the Cold War and the so-called global war on terrorism. He rightly discounts acts of spectacular terrorism as tactical sallies with less strategic weight than the "world's multiple ongoing Islamic insurgencies" which, he continues, "are likely the events that will have most positive long-term effect for ... al Qaeda" (170). Admitting the obvious differences between the USSR and al Qaeda, Darnton argues that what they have in common is promotion of a global ideological struggle that is capable of igniting or exacerbating internal conflicts in the developing world. Like Communism, political Islamism claims to be a revolt against the whole system of states, not a series of attempts to seize control of individual states; like Communism, it can only proceed effectively by attempting to control individual states on the path to the remote and improbable dissolution of the states-system. Arguing in favour of a strategy of containment that will give time for the utopian project to founder, Darnton points out that in this contemporary struggle, where there is no direct nuclear or conventional confrontation between the U.S. and its enemies, the importance of allies, coalition partners, and proxy struggles will be even more important than in the Cold War. In these circumstances, he warns U.S. policy makers that open-handed subsidies to allies may lessen the resource constraints that could facilitate a shift of military attention to counter-subversion, facilitating rapprochement between local rivals. In this connection, he notes Algerian oil revenues as a factor in the failure to achieve rapprochement with neighbouring Morocco. The economic noose around the military has simply not been tight enough. This, in turn, prompts consideration of whether the sharp fall in oil prices since Darnton went to press may have an effect analogous to the 1980s debt crisis in the Americas. Latin American experience also suggests that the U.S. should not pin too much hope on democratization as a stimulus to local rapprochements. Democratization is not the answer.

Examining the many current rivalries between states on the eve of 9/11, Darnton selects that between Algeria and Morocco for close examination, since both were associates with NATO and members of a U.S.-sponsored counter-terrorism initiative, while each had a Muslim majority and was riven by internal conflict and an Islamist insurgency. A familiar account follows, of repeated attempts at rapprochement by heads of state that were frustrated by over-mighty military interests and foreign ministries. The salient point, however, is that the sharp increase in the threat from political Islamists in recent years made no difference, because each country was able to double its defence spending and military establishment within a generation, and neither was badly affected by the 2008 recession. Pondering the conditions that might resolve the stalemate, Darnton suggests that “economic factors that could stimulate rapprochement in the next few years include a steep fall in oil prices” (189). Watch this space.

This is an exceptionally rigorous and closely argued book, and none the worse for not answering every question it poses. The new mission that distracted some Latin American militaries from conventional inter-state rivalry was counter-subversion. But this is not the only alternative game that armed forces may play. Defence of the constitution through direct military rule, nation-building through civil engineering projects and the effective occupation of national territory, and even peace-keeping and post-disaster relief operations are among the tasks the military may choose, or be ordered to undertake. How the armed forces of different countries will rank these missions is in part a question of military culture. For many, conventional inter-state conflict will appear the most prestigious, the most likely to secure individual promotion and to win public esteem. What a blessing the South Atlantic campaign was for the British armed forces after years of wearying attrition and bad press in Northern Ireland! Military culture and preferences may not be constant across Latin American states or over time.

Darnton’s work deservedly found an excellent press but suffered one regrettable economy at their hands. There is no engagement where one might have expected it (93) with Gian Luca Gardini’s *Origins of Mercosur*, which deals with the rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil, and the only reference noted by this reviewer was insubstantial (235, n.70).<sup>1</sup> While the final rapprochement between Peru and Ecuador falls outside the time frame of chapter 5, it was also surprising to find no discussion of David Mares and David Scott Palmer’s *Power, Institutions, and Leadership in War and Peace: Lessons from Peru and Ecuador, 1995-98*.<sup>2</sup> The point here is not to doubt Darnton’s exceptionally wide and assiduous reading, but to register the fact that without a bibliography it is hard to check for possible gaps and assess their possible significance. It is tough having to navigate sixty-seven pages of notes every time a question of this sort drops into one’s mind.

The weakness of explanations relying on regime type has already been noted by Gardini in his study of the rapprochement between Argentina and Brazil, while the central importance of domestic politics is a principal theme of both Andres Villar Gertner’s 2014 Cambridge doctoral thesis on the rapprochement between

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<sup>1</sup> Gian Luca Gardini, *The Origins of Mercosur: Democracy and Regionalization in South America* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> David Mares and David Scott Palmer, *Power, Institutions, and Leadership in War and Peace: Lessons from Peru and Ecuador, 1995-98* (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2013)

Argentina and Chile,<sup>3</sup> and while Mares and Scott Palmer stress Peruvian President Alberto Fujimoro's end run in their account of the resolution of the long-running rivalry between Peru and Ecuador and provide extensive discussion of the circumstances in which presidential diplomacy may or may not prove successful. Darnton's achievement is to bring together the insights in such studies into a systematic and robust explanation with wide applicability. His study is a profoundly anti-realist study in its emphasis on domestic politics, the fissiparous character of the state, and the importance of resource constraints. It will certainly be essential reading for students of Latin American politics for the foreseeable future, and its wider relevance merits more extensive exploration. It also represents a courageous and welcome methodological rapprochement between political science and history through its close attention to detail and well-judged use of primary sources.

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<sup>3</sup> Andrés Villar Gertner, "Resolving frontier disputes between Argentina and Chile: the Beagle Channel crisis (1977-1984)," Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Cambridge, 2014.

**Review by Michael E. Neagle, Nichols College**

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In recent years, scholars have written about the Cold War in much broader context than the great-power rivalry from which it was born. Scholarship has rightly moved beyond the Cold War's effects on the United States and Soviet Union. Such a wider scope – pioneered in books like Odd Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War* – has shown that the conflict had disastrous consequences for much of the rest of the world. This phenomenon was particularly acute in Latin America, which has been astutely chronicled in recent works such as *In from the Cold* edited by Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser, Hal Brands's *Latin America's Cold War*, and Stephen Rabe's *The Killing Zone*.<sup>1</sup> Many of these studies focus on the toll of death and destruction that gripped the region throughout much of the second half of the twentieth century, an era in which virtually every country in Latin America was wracked by civil war, insurgent movements, or state-directed repression in the name of counter-insurgency. In the twenty-first century, these countries are still coping with the Cold War's political, economic, social, and cultural effects.

In his examination of intra-regional relations, though, political scientist Christopher Darnton implicitly challenges the idea of the Cold War as a significant change agent, at least as far as state-to-state interactions are concerned. Darnton argues in favor of 'parochial interests theory,' the idea that states are not driven toward rapprochement because of external factors such as a common enemy. Shared threats, such as those posed by revolutionary movements against entrenched governments and oligarchies, are not sufficient to snuff out regional rivalries. Rather, the surest way to developing alliances is to satisfy the interests of local bureaucracies, such as a state's military or foreign ministry. Agreements arise when these institutions are presented with an alternate mission or when resource constraints give them little choice but to accept a shift away from rivalry. Darnton maintains that only then are states truly prepared to pursue rapprochement with an adversary whose own bureaucracies have been similarly mollified.

To support his theory, Darnton offers three case studies. The first example is Argentina-Brazil in 1979-80. He chronicles a rivalry that extended back to the independence era and continued despite a variety of presidential summits as well as shared concerns about revolutionary movements after World War II. When Argentina and Brazil finally reached rapprochement, he argues, the agreement did not come from anti-communism alone, nor from the fact that both countries were run by military governments. After all, since the mid-1970s, both countries had been part of Operation Condor, the counter-insurgent program involving a host of South American militaries that targeted alleged subversives in each other's countries. Yet true reconciliation remained out of reach, primarily because each country's intransigent foreign ministry feared diminished influence if it lost a rival. Change came following a 1979 hydroelectric agreement. This Tripartite Accord – signed with Paraguay – paved the way for summits between Argentine President General Jorge Rafael Videla and Brazilian President General João Baptista Figueiredo the following year, when the two countries also signed commercial and nuclear cooperation pacts. Darnton maintains that by then, the guerrilla threats in each country were in decline and Argentina and Brazil were encountering economic difficulties that undermined the utility of sustained rivalry. At 58 pages, nearly twice as long as any other chapter in the book,

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<sup>1</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser, eds., *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008); Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Stephen G. Rabe, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

this case study is the most detailed and researched. He anchors it in both published primary sources and foreign ministry archives in Argentina and Brazil.

Darnton's other case studies are more comparative. His second example – Honduras and Nicaragua in 1961 – considers why those countries could achieve rapprochement while their Central American neighbors continued to feud. Drawing largely from published primary sources, Darnton concludes that Honduras and Nicaragua eased tensions because both countries had scarce resources to commit to counter-insurgency, which was a priority in the wake of the Cuban Revolution. The two countries were thus economically compelled to cooperate more deeply. Darnton places less emphasis on the external threats facing each state and more on their respective economic conditions. As a point of contrast, Darnton states that Central American neighbors such as El Salvador and Costa Rica were relatively prosperous compared to Honduras and Nicaragua and thus had little incentive to shift away from rivalry: “The critical difference between the Nicaraguan-Honduran relationship and the other Central American rivalries was economic: resource scarcity induced armed forces in Nicaragua and Honduras to focus on the alternative mission of dealing with internal threats while giving up the external mission of rivalry, acquiescing to the presidential push for rapprochement.” (115) The specter of the United States is also important. Darnton rejects the notion that U.S. military aid facilitated rapprochement, arguing that Honduran-Nicaraguan ties were built before the United States began further aiding the region in the 1960s. If anything, such aid – including support from the Alliance for Progress – may have disincentivized regional cooperation because it helped to stabilize local economies. According to Darnton's parochial-interests theory, state resource constraints are one of the central conditions necessary for rapprochement. The author's point about U.S. military and economic aid is intriguing, if not altogether proven in the chapter.

The third case study considers Argentina again, this time its relationship with neighboring Chile amid the South American debt crisis of the 1980s. Darnton asks why those two countries achieved rapprochement while other Andean nations failed. He concludes that Argentina and Chile were able to ease longstanding tensions – as shown by the November 1984 Treaty of Peace and Friendship – because of the economic constraints that both countries faced as well as the fact that “the preferences and behavior of the armed forces shifted decisively” away from supporting rivalry. (153) He rejects the notion that U.S. Cold War imperatives had much to do with the treaty; indeed, the Ronald Reagan administration paid much less attention to South America than it did to Central America. Rather, economic and military factors were the crucial change agents. Although he references other Andean nations at the start of the chapter, deeper analysis about conditions in other South American countries may have both helped Darnton's argument stand out more sharply and shown more clearly why Argentina and Chile were so unique when compared to their continental neighbors.

From these examples of Cold War-era Latin America, Darnton draws lessons for how the ‘Global War on Terror’ might spur state-to-state rapprochement among predominantly Muslim countries in the present day. While his temporal and geographic shift is a bit jarring, Darnton sees an important thread between the two conflicts. “Indeed, the strongest parallel between Cold War leftist insurgency and contemporary global jihad is the organizational and ideological emphasis on a revolutionary vanguard that catalyzes low-intensity conflicts in the developing world.” (170-171) Applying parochial-interests theory, Darnton surmises that Morocco and Algeria are the two countries most likely to achieve rapprochement in this new age of combating Islamic extremism. The key to such a breakthrough, however, depends on each country's military, which he argues must be politically marginalized or redirected toward supporting counterterrorism. “As in Cold War Latin America,” he concludes, “regional rivalries are undermining contemporary coalition building efforts against the common threat of terrorism and insurgency in the Islamic world” (190). To this end, the United States

could help more by doing less. Darnton recommends that the United States restrict military aid, promote human rights, and minimize its troop presence abroad in order to compel regional states to work together against Islamic extremists. By the same token, if a state is truly seeking rapprochement with a rival neighbor, it must be prepared to reject U.S. military aid, be certain the other side is ready to normalize relations, and have the support of key bureaucratic agencies. Whether such prescriptions for rapprochement still hold given the rise of formidable groups such as the Islamic State is a question the book understandably does not address given the so-called caliphate's recent emergence. But it is one worth considering.

Darnton makes a compelling case for parochial-interests theory, an argument greatly aided by the clarity in which he writes. He explicitly articulates the thesis of each chapter, albeit a bit repetitively at times, defines his key terms (e.g., rivalry, rapprochement), lists supporting evidence (e.g., first, second, third, etc.), and offers many helpful charts and graphs that effectively illustrate his points. Moreover, it is clear with whom Darnton is conversing. The first two (necessarily) jargon-heavy chapters establish how his theory contrasts with other schools of thought, such as realists, constructivists, and liberals. But Darnton's description is largely free of such discipline-specific terminology. In fact, his methodology is interdisciplinary, particularly in his use of foreign archives and published primary sources as a historian would.

A deeper look into the countries he considers could have strengthened his argument still more. While Darnton's concern is with state-to-state relations and bureaucratic politics, some sociocultural considerations may have helped to explain more fully why rivalries persist. After all, the views held by diplomats and bureaucrats are learned, cultivated, and reinforced in a particular social and cultural context. Some additional insight also could have been offered about the selection of the three case studies. Certainly, they aptly represent his parochial-interests theory. But were these the only examples of rapprochement during the Cold War era? More examination about the militaries in those case studies also would have been useful. Darnton adequately explains that they had a vested interest in maintaining rivalry so they could continue to receive financial support for their institution. But to what extent were such approaches conscious considerations by historical actors? Was there any meaningful debate among officers? Deliberation on these questions might have revealed a variety of perspectives and thus complicated the perception of the military as a monolithic institution.

Ultimately, Darnton's study helps shed brighter light on Cold War-era Latin America. For U.S. scholars, the book serves as an important reminder that the United States neither dictated to, nor fully controlled, its hemispheric allies. The region's states had a great deal of space in which to maneuver for themselves, to manage conflicts and rivalries according to their own interests and designs. And while the Cold War certainly brought tremendous change to the region, common concerns were not always enough to mend fences between neighbors.

## Author's Response by Christopher Darnton, Catholic University of America

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I thank Thomas Field, Charles Jones, and Michael Neagle for their careful readings and helpful critiques of my book, and Tom Maddux and Dustin Walcher for organizing this roundtable for H-Diplo. All the reviewers accurately and fairly characterized the arguments of *Rivalry and Alliance Politics in Cold War Latin America*. Since the book is unavoidably a work of political science, I am pleased with its legibility across disciplinary boundaries, as well as grateful for the acuity and interest of the historians who volunteered to critique it. Interdisciplinary conversations are especially productive and pleasant when we can begin with clarity about the terms of our disagreements and differences of emphasis. The reviewers appear to find the book's evidence from comparative case studies and primary sources more or less persuasive, but they also raise important questions about political culture, scholarly literature, and policy relevance.

*Rivalry and Alliance Politics* tells a broadly materialist story about organizational politics: the parochial interest of government agencies helps maintain interstate rivalries, while conditions of threat and scarcity can foster conflict resolution. In response, all three reviewers inquired about the role of organizational and national culture in influencing Latin American security policymaking. This emphasis on ideas and context is a reliable refrain from historians to political scientists, and a welcome one. Historical context and group identity surely matter for protracted conflicts and foreign policy (see 28-29, 46-49, 198-200). For instance, like many who have spent time studying Itamaraty (Brazil's Foreign Ministry), consulting its archives, reading its periodicals and in-house historical and analytical publications, and interviewing its current and former diplomats, I have been deeply impressed with its organizational uniqueness, its sense of self, nation, and history, and its carefully cultivated worldview.

Why, then, take a relatively stark analytical position in the book rather than trying to encompass more fully each case's complexity? First, I wanted to present a clear and consistent argument and to deal fairly with evidence and alternatives. Although I make some specific claims about the preferences and behavior of state agencies, it would be misleading and unjust for me to sweep up everything related to bureaucracy or domestic politics in a case study as evidence in favor of my argument and against its competitors.<sup>1</sup> And when aspects of historical cases do not fit my argument, I am especially interested in whether an alternative theory can better account for them and for the overall empirical pattern. Although I agree with Field that these moves necessarily "flatten historical narratives" somewhat, I hope that the book does not in fact compress the case studies to the level of "vignettes" or "caricatures." I do see virtue in parsimony (to a point), but of course there are tradeoffs in any research approach (and elsewhere I've critiqued historians for the opposite tendency).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, Graham Allison's classic study of bureaucratic institutions usefully distinguishes between "organizational process" and "governmental politics" (his Models II and III, respectively) as explanations of foreign policy behavior. See Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Little, Brown, 1971), 67-68, 144-145. For a more ideational (and also relatively parsimonious) take on the organizational politics of Latin American armed forces and security policy, see Maiah Jaskoski, *Military Politics and Democracy in the Andes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> See Christopher Darnton, "After Decentering: The Politics of Agency and Hegemony in Hemispheric Relations," *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (2013): 231-239, especially 236-237.



Second, a useful theory should provide explanation across comparative cases, not just contextual richness within particular episodes, and should account for both continuity and change in foreign relations. Scholars may argue that nationalism, misperception, or organizational culture played a greater role in certain failed conflict resolution efforts that are addressed in *Rivalry and Alliance Politics*. However, a more powerful critique would also explain why such ideational forces evaporated, transformed, or were defeated in the rare instances of successful cooperation that the book also analyzes. If pathologies and perceptions, rather than vested interests, sustained rivalry between Argentina and Brazil in the early Cold War, for instance, then we need a related story about why these views shifted in both countries in the 1970s, before the Falklands/Malvinas War, the debt crisis, and redemocratization. I assessed in the book two ideational hypotheses that could do this: entrepreneurial U.S. promotion of regional norms and the social construction of cooperative identities (as well as ideational factors suggested by South American scholars, such as Brazilian President João Figueiredo's personal sympathies towards Argentina). I ultimately found these unpersuasive both for their chronological fit and their lack of support in archival and published documents. The inefficacy and inattention of the United States in addressing this and other regional conflicts in the Americas was particularly stark. Overall, ideational shifts, whether organizational or national, did not track well with foreign policy change in Cold War Latin America.

That broad pattern still leaves a question of agency. Neagle asks whether missions and policies were subject to "conscious considerations" and "meaningful debate." This not only suggests a counterfactual of whether deliberations could have gone another way, but also points to the possibility of leadership to reconfigure ongoing conflicts. Similarly, Field doubts "that state agencies roguishly persist in pointless rivalries merely out of petty bureaucratic greed" and that leaders "should be unconditionally praised" for cooperative intent. Certainly we could envision cases with the motivations transposed, and ask about the prospects for peacemaking diplomacy from below. And Jones inquires about the effectiveness of alternative "tasks the military may choose, or be ordered to undertake," such as peacekeeping and nation-building, for redirecting bureaucratic interests to enable rapprochement. I would not rule out this possibility, particularly because the civil-military and regional security landscapes across Latin America have been significantly transformed since the Cold War. I did not, however, see any positive evidence of creative redefinition of conflicts and introduction of novel missions in the cases I examined. The litany of internal obstruction and failed diplomacy in *Rivalry and Alliance Politics* warns leaders to refrain from undue confidence in a swift and skilful reframing of threats and missions, in bureaucratic compliance, and in personal diplomacy for conflict transformation.

Both Jones and Field identify scholarly works on inter-American relations that I could have cited or engaged more extensively in the book. I agree: we should strive for deeper conversation with more sources, particularly across disciplinary boundaries, and we should call out omissions and assess their significance, which is an important task of criticism. More pointedly, though, Field claims that particularly on Argentine-Brazilian relations, "rather than mobilize the extensive, contextualized work of historians," I "disposed of any debt to the existing literature" and was "dismissing decades of nuanced scholarship by historians." Here I demur. The six volumes Field identifies, all by historians writing in English, are predominantly concerned with interactions between the United States and Latin America, either bilaterally or regionally. They do not really analyze the specific cases of relations *among* Latin American countries that I examine. This is not a

shortcoming of these excellent works, most of which I have appreciatively cited elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Rather, it is emblematic of what existing scholarship has generally not done, particularly for the period before the 1980s wave of redemocratization, and what *Rivalry and Alliance Politics* tries to redress.

For several of the specific cases I examine in the book (Costa Rican-Nicaraguan relations circa 1960, the Argentine-Brazilian presidential summits of 1947 and 1972, etc.) there is simply little to no dedicated scholarship, particularly in English. That is not to say that there are no existing narratives—the space fills quickly with participants’ memoirs, which often serve as the nurse logs for generations of national (and at times too deferential) scholarship. Field sees these as “relatively easy targets,” but surveying the landscape of most of these cases, these are the windmills that we have. And so one of my goals in *Rivalry and Alliance Politics* was itself a rapprochement of sorts: to engage works of scholarship and memory by authors from the countries being studied, reading what Argentines, Brazilians, Chileans, and others have written about their own states’ foreign policies and diplomatic histories, as against international relations theories drawn predominantly from North American scholarship. This engagement may not revise the major theses in Anglophone historiography, but that body of work has had surprisingly little to say about some crucial episodes of diplomatic relations among Latin American countries.

Finally, *Rivalry and Alliance Politics* extended the argument beyond Cold-War Latin America, examining interstate rivalry in the Islamic world during the era of global counterterrorism. All three reviewers expressed interest in the argument’s contemporary application, but also some reservations about its scope and lessons. Neagle observes the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) as a common threat to a number of countries in the Middle East, while Jones notes the precipitous fall in oil prices as a resource constraint to energy-exporting countries. The parochial-interest theory I developed in the book suggests two critical questions: whether alternative missions and economic constraints dovetail in order to put simultaneous pressure on rival countries, and how state institutions channel and respond to those forces. Morocco and Algeria, the countries I examined in Chapter Six, are a long way from the main ISIS theatre. ISIS does provide a rare common enemy for traditional rivals Iraq and Iran, and both countries are major oil exporters. In fact, the two countries formalized an intelligence-sharing pact (along with Russia and Syria) last weekend.<sup>4</sup> However, ISIS currently threatens Iranian allies, such as the Syrian regime of Bashar al-Assad and Iraqi Shiite militias, rather than Tehran itself. Therefore, Iran’s state agencies may not have developed core missions against ISIS that could displace an interstate focus on adversaries like Iraq (and Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United States). There is a yawning gap between identifying a common enemy and achieving lasting cooperation, and this is the space *Rivalry and Alliance Politics* explores.

What if anything can and should the United States do to increase regional security? Field wonders what the consequences of serious U.S. foreign aid cutbacks would really be on regional rivalries between developing countries, and whether achieving such cooperation would be a good thing. I share these concerns. Economic contraction (backed by aid cutbacks or sanctions) can influence foreign policy retrenchment, but it can also lead to external aggression or internal repression. And any financial pressure large enough to affect a state’s

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<sup>3</sup> E.g., in Christopher Darnton, “Asymmetry and Agenda-Setting in U.S.-Latin American Relations: Rethinking the Origins of the Alliance for Progress,” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Volume 14, Number 4, Fall 2012, 55-92.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Gordon, “Russia Surprises US With Accord on Battling ISIS,” *New York Times*, September 28, 2015, A1.

decision making about security priorities is likely to have unintended and undesirable consequences in other areas, such as social welfare cutbacks. Moreover, leverage may be limited: some countries may be able to weather financial coercion either through their own economic clout or the countervailing activity of other great power patrons. Economic coercion is a difficult task, and my book does not offer a detailed roadmap for third-party policy. However, it does warn that simply injecting resources into partner states can seriously undermine the construction of effective alliances.

Fundamentally, *Rivalry and Alliance Politics* focuses on causal analysis and comparative-historical research. Although I believe the empirical evidence does yield a few central policy lessons, I do not presume to tell policy makers what their preferences are. If U.S. leaders prioritize international conflict resolution in particular cases, I have tried to highlight some economic and organizational conditions that increase the likelihood of success. If they deem other objectives more important, such as promoting democracy or boosting ‘partner capacity’ for counterterrorism, then I hope the book may still be useful by calling attention to tradeoffs and unintended consequences for regional conflict and alliance management, which have a great deal to do with how state agencies respond to opportunity and constraint.