

Bahia's Miss Brazils (not recognised as Northeasterners by Recife's *Diário de Pernambuco*) followed Carmen Miranda's lead in wearing Afro-Bahian *baiana* costumes (which made them legible to US audiences). Campbell concludes about Hacker: 'it was easier for a white woman with a German last name to stand in as Afro-Bahian than it was for Bahia to accept being part of the Northeast – a region defined not only by race, but by poverty and decline' (p. 159). The profound cultural influence of José de Alencar's indigenist novel, *Iracema* (1865), about the relationship between a sixteenth-century Indigenous woman and a Portuguese man, which results in the birth of a *mestiço* (mixed-race) son and her death, is another theme. The novel was invoked in discussions about the Coca-Colas, 1955's Miss Brazil (Ceará's Emília Corrêa Lima), and the *jangadeiros*, characterised as *caboclos* (people of Indigenous and European ancestry), not Afro-Brazilians.

Campbell ultimately highlights the unresolved contradiction in portrayals of the Northeast. The region simultaneously represents Brazil's 'authentic' culture and exemplifies the country's problems: relative poverty, underdevelopment, and potential for rebellion. Inevitably, her sources skew toward those that might be characterised as elite, whose silences and omissions she carefully parses. At times, I wished for more extensive discussions of the *cordel* literature (the closest to a popular voice), which usually come at the end of the chapters and sometimes seem rushed. Nevertheless, *Region Out of Place* helps to explain the still problematic place of the Northeast in Brazil.

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Rachel Schmidt, *Framing a Revolution: Narrative Battles in Colombia's Civil War*

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Rachel Schmidt's *Framing a Revolution* offers profound insights into the ways in which we understand what it means to be a perpetrator of violence, a victim of conflict, and – importantly – an individual who occupies both roles. The book engages with social movement studies, and framing in particular, to paint a picture of the complicated, lived experience of (ex-)combatants in their transitions in and out of Colombia's civil war. The book makes contributions to studies of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), and gendered participation in armed conflict.

In the introductory chapter, Schmidt justifies her focus on framing and discursive battles when it comes to understanding ex-combatants' transitions to civilian life. She writes: 'the longer I stayed in Colombia, the longer I saw these framing

contests intersecting all around me, and the more I realised how much they might teach us about sustainable peace' (p. 4). Beyond a simple examination of why people desert armed groups, Schmidt's book paints a fair picture of the complications and contradictions of different paths toward demobilisation: 'It quickly became clear that how and why insurgent organisations, governments, and individual combatants were framing stories of desertion was critical to understanding the complexity of these individual decisions to fight or flee and the experiences that came afterwards' (p. 8).

The book then presents the three major frames and counter-frames Schmidt identified (which she acknowledges are not always clear-cut binaries): victims versus perpetrators, revolutionaries versus narco-terrorists, and loyalists versus deserters. She draws on life histories to illustrate each of these frames, and the ways in which they overlap, contradict one another, and are employed by different actors. The empirical chapters contrast the various frames strategically used by the government against armed groups, armed groups against the government, and armed groups against other groups (for example, those relating to 'deserters, loyalists, and "would-be" deserters' (p. 36)). Indeed, the author notes: 'a strong frame helps to organize confusing or contradictory events into a narrative that people can accept and that motivates action. Framing helps to reduce cognitive dissonance by organising these stories into an experience that fits expectations' (p. 121). This is the overall goal of the book: to understand the ways in which narratives – and narrative battles – are used to explain civil war and transitions to peace.

Schmidt's fieldwork for the book is deeply impressive. She travelled to multiple research sites in seven Colombian departments, many of which continue to be rendered dangerous by ongoing conflict dynamics. She gained access to active and ex-combatants from the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, FARC), the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army, ELN) and the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia, AUC), including deserters, those who officially demobilised, and some who have rejoined armed groups. In a climate where (ex-)combatants are deeply suspicious of outsiders, she was able to create bonds of trust that facilitated a respectful and ethical sharing of stories. It is clear from the way that the author narrates her ongoing communications with interviewees, often well after her fieldwork was complete, that she was able to build genuine relationships. Although sometimes complicated (for example, when they asked her to send money or invest in unsavoury business opportunities), Schmidt always writes respectfully and empathetically about the ways in which she was able to connect with her cast of characters. I was particularly impressed that the author was able to gain sufficient confidence to be entrusted with stories that are notoriously kept silent in Colombia; as a gender and conflict researcher myself, I am well aware that there are certain issues – particularly around the nuances of experiences with sexual violence and harassment within armed groups – that are nigh impossible to discuss with certain actors. These complications are related to ongoing trauma, shame and fear, as well as a broader desire not to undermine armed groups' (in particular, the FARC's) legitimacy in a post-Accord setting. As a testament to this trust, she recounted these stories with thoughtful sensitivity.

Beyond reflection on the methods she used to undertake her research, Schmidt demonstrates her ability to tell a balanced story throughout the text. By including stories in interviewees' own words, she shines a light on the ways in which they make sense of their own experiences. She carefully analyses the 99 testimonies collected to find overlapping patterns. She acknowledges her own positionality and struggles throughout the process: 'As a feminist and human rights scholar, I was troubled that I found myself deeply empathizing with members of [the AUC]. But this is the thing about really listening to people: this is when all the shades of gray filter in, and we begin to doubt the credibility of frames we have long accepted' (p. 155). Such reflections are useful signposts to readers about how to assess the hierarchies of 'victimhood', the veracity of testimonies, and the discomfort that arises from engaging with violent actors.

While the author includes an impressive diversity of (ex-)combatant violence, I would have liked to see a broader range of alternative voices, namely in Appendix B's 'expert interviews'. While she explains the difficulties she had in terms of getting access to certain public officials from the demobilisation agency, reintegration agency, police and army, I suggest that the government 'counter-narratives' could have been asserted more compellingly by expanding this pool of interlocutors.

The conclusion examines what it means to frame reintegration, and underscores the clear policy relevance of the book's findings. With that said, I would have liked to see concrete policy recommendations outlined more explicitly. Beyond identifying the multiple shortfalls of Colombia's DDR programmes, Schmidt could have done more hand-holding when it comes to providing different actors with a clear-cut roadmap for how to make positive transformations. The author further notes that the lessons from the book travel to other conflict contexts; however, I would have been interested to see how she envisions that this study travels elsewhere. Moreover, although the author engages with a gender lens throughout the text, it did not always take centre stage as much as it could have. This is not necessarily a criticism; indeed, I applaud the author for incorporating a cross-cutting gender focus in a book about DDR. Similar studies are often, lamentably, gender-blind. With that said, I would have been interested to know more about the particularly gendered implications for DDR programmes and transitions away from conflict. I particularly enjoyed the ways in which the author included discussions of varying expectations around masculinities within her discussion of gender.

In all, this book is a shining example of how to thoughtfully conduct research in complicated contexts and with complex research subjects. Finding ways to humanise without justifying violent actions, and to nuance without reinforcing existing stereotypes is an incredibly difficult balancing act, but it is one that Schmidt has achieved with remarkable empathy and astuteness.

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