

Weizman's (2007) notion of field causalities. Jusionyte's relatively deep engagement with Weizman's school of forensic architecture is attendant to the possibility of counterforensic approaches that utilize forensic science against nation-states' monopoly on legitimate violence. With this orientation, Jusionyte's portrait of border violence through the medical terminology of first responders is a worthy offering in this counterforensic field. This short stimulating dialogue in the

Introduction paves the way for a portrayal of the border as threshold, where the local and federal combine and come to be at odds through the routine imperatives of their jobs, thus exposing the violent contradictions of border governance.

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Marcos Mendoza

The Patagonian Sublime: The Green Economy and Post-Neoliberal Politics.

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OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES, A WAVE of left-leaning governments in Latin America known as the New Left has come to power by contesting neoliberal development. Promising counter-reforms to the reforms delivered by the Washington Consensus, these governments have experimented with post-neoliberal development alternatives that emphasize greater state control over the economy, higher rates of corporate taxation and social welfare spending, and key overhauls to labor and environmental institutions, among others. In many cases, post-neoliberal development has been coupled with a doubling-down on older models of resource extraction and primary commodities export through newer models of neo-extractivism

and re-primarization.

In his new book *The Patagonian Sublime*, anthropologist Marcos Mendoza asks a novel and timely question of the New Left: how are conservation and the green economy being governed under post-neoliberalism? Mendoza explores the intersection of environmental sustainability and economic development with one particular post-neoliberal alternative in Argentina, known as Kirchnerismo. Kirchnerismo describes a political movement led by former Presidents Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, a husband and wife who served consecutive terms in office from 2003–2015. Mixing ideologies of twentieth-century Peronism and twenty-first-century global-

izing capitalism, Kirchnerismo advocates economic nationalism, political sovereignty, social justice, foreign market competition, and natural resource exploitation. Mendoza's main argument is that the green economy, which is "most closely associated in Argentina with protected area conservation and ecotourism" (p. 8), is integral to Kirchnerismo. A major reason for this association is the Kirchners' personal and financial ties to the Patagonian province of Santa Cruz, where they began their political careers. Santa Cruz specializes in two very different commodities: oil and ecotourism. The Kirchners have helped expand both industries through a political-economic agenda that Mendoza calls green productivism. While serving in the short term to stimulate growth and legitimize Kirchnerismo, green productivism also generates a series of contradictions undermining the long-term viability of post-neoliberalism in Argentina.

The book draws on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in El Chaltén, a mountain town in Santa Cruz located just outside Parque Nacional Los Glaciares, and known as the trekking capital of the nation. Mendoza follows a diverse set of actors – alpine mountaineers, adventure trekkers, tourism entrepreneurs, seasonal service workers, park rangers, land managers, scientists, and environmental activists – in order "to acquire a multiperspectival understanding of the politics of the green economy" (p. xiii). The Patagonian Sublime consists of eight chapters divided into four parts, three of which examine the various spheres of El Chaltén's green economy (tourist consumption, tourism service production,

and the conservation state), and one of which assesses green productivism and Kirchnerismo. This structure helps Mendoza articulate the green economy as a conjuncture of forces involving capital, labor, nature, and the state. He argues that in El Chaltén, these forces combine to produce a green economy built on rent capture, place branding, and land monopolization.

Mendoza anchors the book around the master concept of green productivism. Green productivism is theorized in layers, as a logic of capital accumulation, a strategy of political rule, and a cultural project of national identity. These layers converge around a public-private alliance between the National Parks Administration and local entrepreneurs to control how protected areas are accessed and valued by tourists through territorial and symbolic monopolies. Mendoza refers to this alliance as the semiotic estate, arguing that Argentine post-neoliberal conservation is a form of rentier capitalism generating "expanding sources of revenue for the conservation state and the tourism industry" (p. 12). Consequently, he sees conservation and agro-extraction as complements, not opposites, and equates the green economy to other domains of natural resource exploitation. He suggests that Patagonia is the crown jewel of Argentina's semiotic estate because it embodies the alpine sublime: an exclusive category of global mountain environment mixing adventure tourism with the awe-inspiring beauty of large-scale landscapes.

Several of the scholarly contributions that Mendoza makes through *The Patagonian Sublime* are of distinct concern to geographers. First, the book employs a Marxian

framework of critical political economy to analyze ecotourism as an accumulation strategy. Mendoza uses Marx's trinity of capital, land, and labor to understand post-neoliberal conservation, while also paying attention to the mediating role of the central state. In choosing this framework, he aims to redress anthropologists' lack of engagement with land dynamics, and therefore dynamics of ground rent and rentierism, in capitalist production. Geographers will appreciate this move, since it mirrors current parallel efforts in the human-environment tradition to foreground land, rent, and the state in theorizing capitalist natures. Second, the book challenges scholars to break away from "the totalizing strains of thinking within scholarship on neoliberal conservation" (p. 187) by focusing on an actually existing alternative and its messy struggle for counter-hegemony. Mendoza's insights into post-neoliberal conservation add nuance and texture to a multiplying body of research (neoliberal conservation) that too often sees only what it seeks to find (neoliberal conservation). Finally, the book exposes important contradictions of the green economy and post-neoliberal politics in Argentina, which serve geographers studying these processes elsewhere. Mendoza argues that green productivism reflects an all-of-the-above approach to resource governance that is more accurately labeled light green politics. The economic potential of Argentina's conservation estate is leveraged only to the extent that it does not infringe upon the Kirchners' other development priorities – namely export-oriented commodity production and natural resource exploitation – sparking conflict between the

ecotourism and extractive sectors in Patagonia, and wider challenges to Kirchnerismo.

The Patagonian Sublime is an empirically rich and theoretically ambitious book. At times, however, this theoretical ambition outstrips the empirical evidence, diminishing clarity and coherence. One of Mendoza's major arguments is that conservation in Argentina empowers the rentier state. He writes, "As a rentier state agency, the park service concerns itself with maximizing ground rent" (p. 11). Yet the details he provides hardly prove this argument. We learn that only 25 percent of the national parks charge an entrance fee (the basis of extracting ground rent) and the park service "does not generate enormous sums of money for the federal government" (p. 176). Ultimately, it remains unclear whether rentier capitalism is the best lens for describing the conservation state in Argentina. Furthermore, Mendoza's discussion of risk subjectivity in the Patagonian green economy is abstract and ambiguous, lacking a certain coherence with the book's other themes and fitting awkwardly into his overall analysis. Notwithstanding these issues, *The Patagonian Sublime* achieves plenty. As the first book-length study of post-neoliberal conservation, it addresses a gap in existing knowledge about political economies of the environment, and adds to ongoing debates in sociocultural anthropology, environmental-economic geography, political ecology, and Latin American studies.

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