

the importance of disaggregating police reforms and giving more consideration to the extent to which the content of the reform is well suited to addressing the enduring challenges to democratic policing. One limitation of the book is that it lumps together police reform processes that diverge in crucial ways – the largely operational reforms of the Chilean police are not the same as the deeper structural reform process faced by Colombia's police. Indeed, the book's overarching focus is on operational reforms, particularly community policing. Even in the Colombian case, where the 1993 reform process comprised ambitious structural and external oversight reforms, the book largely focuses on municipal security policies that undoubtedly contributed to local security improvements, but it remains unclear what was these *municipal*-level policies reformed in the *National Police* beyond operational changes implemented by local units. Instead, a greater effort to disaggregate reforms might well have elucidated the limitations of operational reforms such as community policing to address the challenges posed by unchecked police autonomy and outright politicisation. By the same token, a disaggregated approach to police reform would also highlight the limitations of even well-intentioned reforms to democratise, demilitarise and professionalise police forces (as in Uruguay and Costa Rica) in curbing the potential for rising crime and violence to rupture pro-reform political coalitions and generate pressure to dismantle reforms. As the authors note at the end of book, disentangling these relationships between the content of reform and the nature of the structural challenges to be addressed will be essential in light of the police's role in either advancing or holding back the democratic erosion taking place throughout the region.

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## Laurie Denyer Willis, *Go with God: Political Exhaustion and Evangelical Possibility in Suburban Brazil*

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This monograph describes the lives of several families in the urban *comunidade* (community) of Batan – a neighbourhood in the north-west of the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The book focuses on women (mostly) and men who frequent Pentecostal services and turn to God in search of ways to carve out a place in the city, and to make a life. Rather than starting out with a lengthy description of their economic predicaments, Laurie Denyer Willis takes us straight to her interlocutors' embodied experiences of grace with a gripping style that stays close to their vocabularies and their

life worlds all through the five chapters of the book. In each chapter, Denyer Willis briefly introduces some of the analytic discussions that concern her, but she has placed most of the theoretical discussions in the notes, which helps the reader to focus on the rich ethnographic material and analytic reflections at hand.

The emergence of innumerable Pentecostal temples and communities, primarily located in *baixa renda* (low-income) neighbourhoods in Rio de Janeiro, has been described by plenty of scholars in and outside Brazil (cf. Stephan Lanz, 'The Born-Again Favela: The Urban Informality of Pentecostalism in Rio de Janeiro', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 40: 3 (2016), pp. 541–58; Clara Mafra and Ronaldo de Almeida (eds.), *Religiões e cidades: Rio de Janeiro e São Paulo* (2009)). Denyer Willis adds to that body of work heartfelt insights into the day-to-day lives of *crentes* (believers) who live in Rio's *subúrbios* (suburbs) – the marginalised outskirts of the city. Though the peripheries of Rio de Janeiro have gained more attention in the past ten years (cf. Neiva Vieira da Cunha and Gabriel de Santis Feltran (eds.), *Sobre periferias: Novos conflitos no Brasil contemporâneo* (2013); Carly Barboza Machado, 'Pentecostalismo e o sofrimento do (ex-)bandido: Testemunhos, mediações, modos de subjetivação e projetos de cidadania nas periferias', *Horizontes Antropológicos*, 20: 42 (2014), pp. 153–80; Márcio Piñon de Oliveira and Nelson da Nobrega Fernandes (eds.), *150 anos de subúrbio carioca* (2010)), much urban ethnographic work still focuses on favelas located in the southern and eastern parts of the city. The vast neighbourhoods in the western parts of the city (Bangu, Campo Grande, Santa Cruz, etc.) have received much less attention. As Denyer Willis argues, hegemonic representations that picture these peripheral neighbourhoods as 'waste ridden' and as 'wasted spaces' add to the racial discrimination, dearth of functioning infrastructures and state violence another layer of marginalisation that profoundly impacts residents of the *subúrbios*.

Few of the works that focus on the popularity of Pentecostalism in Brazil offer what Denyer Willis offers. By way of her descriptions of the pain, joy and hopes of the women she lived with, she shows us why they engage in spirited church services and in-house prayer sessions. In detailed ethnographic tours that focus on the sensed environments, she takes us to living rooms, churches and scooter rides to convey the *whoosh* of grace – those brief and transient moments when the Holy Spirit makes itself felt to her interlocutors. By means of an ethnographic technique she describes as 'tunneling' she shows that *crentes* in the *subúrbios* do not project their futures in relation to a state that has abandoned them but in relation to a Pentecostal God who has plans for them and who reveals opportunities to the watchful believer whose sensorium is attuned to the gifts of the Spirit.

In the conclusion of her monograph (p. 112), Denyer Willis writes:

Tunneling like this, through feelings of desire, euphoria, and loss, produces a patchy work, one that bypasses other ways of knowing, telling and understanding. A tunnel can't tell a whole story. It is not meant to. A tunnel reveals and obscures, making the landscapes it evades impossible to fully grasp. As such, the stories of people's lives that I tell here cannot be told completely or even accurately. But I hope that I get the feeling and sensation right.

Reflecting on her book, and thinking about my own experiences in Rio de Janeiro, I can safely say that she managed to get much of the feelings and sensations right.

During my own fieldwork with *evangélicos* in Rio de Janeiro, I have often wondered how to grasp the experiences of the people I worked with. Denyer Willis did not only see, smell and hear things I did not, but she also caught in words things that lingered in my mind and body, which I could not catch, let alone describe, and which only after reading her monograph attained a place in my consciousness.

Throughout the book, Denyer Willis connects the embodied experiences of grace to day-to-day politics and violence. At various moments in her monograph, she weaves in traces of her initial questions that concerned the exceptional status of Batan as the only community in Rio de Janeiro that had an Unidade de Polícia Pacificadora (Pacifying Police Unit, UPP) in an area that was dominated by a *milícia* (a mafia-like organisation that can include off-duty police officers and fire-fighters) and not by a gang of drug traffickers. As she describes, during her stay in Batan she gradually began to understand that this exceptional condition does not matter that much to the residents since their predicament did not radically change. Tellingly, one of her interlocutors corrects her when she describes Batan as ‘pacified’ and pushes her to question the temporal projections that portray a ‘before’ and an ‘after’ of the reign of one or another armed actor. ‘For many in the community, the logic of pacification simply continued the logic of the militia, which had for the most part been the logic of the traffickers’ (p. 37), Denyer Willis writes.

Denyer Willis also opposes voices that portray all Brazilian *evangélicos* as conservative Christians who uncritically support(ed) Jair Bolsonaro, the former Brazilian president who managed to gain popular support from several prominent pastor–politicians before and during his presidency. This is not to say that she pictures the longing for grace as inherently good or unproblematic. I take from her book the insight that we can understand how this longing for grace is frequently abused politically only when we perceive how it is connected to pain, loss and desire, and to the myriad ways Pentecostalism helps people in *subúrbios* to channel these emotions and to make sense of a world that repeatedly falls apart. For those who want to understand that (and more), I greatly recommend reading Denyer Willis’ monograph.

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## **Mateo Jarquín, *The Sandinista Revolution: A Global Latin American History***

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To write the history of the Sandinista Revolution, Mateo Jarquín argues, it is crucial to treat the leaders of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) as