

Manuel Gonzalo, *India from Latin America: Peripherisation, Statebuilding, and Demand-Led Growth* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), pp. 290, \$128 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780367542023.

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In *India from Latin America: Peripherisation, Statebuilding, and Demand-Led Growth*, Manuel Gonzalo sets out to explain the emergence of the Indian economy over the last half a century, from the perspective of Latin American developmental economics thinking. Gonzalo is explicit about situating his perspective within a specifically Latin American framing. He draws on three main bodies of work in this regard. First is the structuralism perspective of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and in particular the contributions of Raúl Prebisch, Celso Furtado, and Anibal Pinto. Second are a range of contributions from Latin American scholars on the role of the state in the economy, including J. Fiori and Carlos Medeiros, in addition to the so-called National Innovation System (NSI) thinkers such as José Cassiolato, Helena Lastres, and the Economics of Innovation group, Institute of Economics, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). Third are Brazilian thinkers Maria da Conceição Tavares, Mario Possas, and Franklin Serrano, and centered on the two large groups of political economy in UFRJ and UNICAMP (State University of Campinas) in Brazil. By combining these various prominent perspectives that have emerged from the last half century, in particular of political and developmental economics thinking in Latin America, Gonzalo applies a particularly Latin-flavored lens to his analysis of India.

His contention throughout the book is that in undertaking such a task, and applying a theoretical lens developed in one part of the globe to another, there is a great potential for South–South learning to take place. India and Latin America, he contends, have much to learn from each other, and could benefit greatly from more direct comparison and communication. For the premise of the book to hold up to scrutiny, one must subscribe to the author’s (quite normative) view that we can benefit from an “outsider’s” view when trying to understand economic development in a historic and geographically situated manner. The obvious question this provokes is: What can be gained from Gonzalo’s Latin-American infused analysis that adds to the understanding of the Indian case advanced by scholars of that country? In my reading, there is indeed much to be gained by scholars from different parts of the world sharing their perspectives and analyses, though, as an economic geographer, it perhaps goes without saying that I would share Gonzalo’s view on this point.

Turning to the subject matter at play, Gonzalo breaks down his analysis of the emergence and evolution of the modern Indian economy into three phases, which he calls “peripherisation,” “statebuilding,” and “demand-led growth.” The book’s chapters are organized into these three main sections, which take us chronologically right back (briefly) to the seventh century, through the arrival of Vasca de Gama, the colonization of India, the founding of the modern state, and the crises of the postwar years, and to the rapid growth in economy and population of the country in recent years. In Part 1—chapters 2, 3, and 4—Gonzalo details the fall from grace of India (at the hands of her colonizers) from the regional center of the Indian Ocean ecosystem and major trade center: “from regional centre to global periphery” as he calls it (p. 87). As Gonzalo claims on page 88, his training as a Latin American economist allows him to “think from a peripheral perspective,” and he constructs his analysis of the Indian case as a move

from core to periphery and back again as we look forward to the possible “Asian century” (p. 241). Gonzalo’s critical perspective on colonization processes, due no doubt to his upbringing in Argentina and studies in Brazil, allows him to see the British colonial period in India as the driver of this core–periphery shift in India’s status. The figures he cites for this shift are that “in 1700, the Indian subcontinent represented 24.5% of the world’s gross domestic product (GDP), and in 1750, Indian manufactures represented 24.5% of the total world-manufactured production (Nayyar, 2013; Bairoch, 1982)” (pp. 88, 89). However, following the extension of British colonization of the subcontinent, “In around 50 years, the Indian participation in the world manufacturing output fell from 20% to 3%, and the piece goods exports went from more than 33% of the total exports to 3.7%” (p. 91).

In the second section of the book, chapters 5 and 6, Gonzalo turns to the making of the modern Indian state that we see today. He focuses on two main aspects therein: state building and politics, and the construction of a National System of Innovation. Independence in 1947 splits this analysis into two halves—the late colonial and postwar era—and then the rapid state-building period interjected with various crises across the leaderships of Nehru (1947 to 1964), Indira Gandhi’s first phase (1966 to 1977), and her second phase giving way to her son Rajiv Gandhi in the 1980s. In addition to covering the major political developments of this era, including the various religious, economic, political, and military crises the modern Indian state has faced, Gonzalo explores the emergence of the Indian NSI from the perspective of its state-driven development. The establishment of the Indian nuclear and space programs under Nehru and the increasing militarization in the wider region are cited as major driving forces for the NSI’s establishment and growth. Nehru’s strong guiding hand over economic policy was underpinned by different approaches, Gonzalo contends: “there was a mix of different policies based on other views, such as the protection to the cottage industry; a Gandhian rooted policy; and a partial land reform, mainly in Calcutta, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, where the Communist Party had a strong influence” (p. 119). In telling a coherent and concise story about the evolution of the Indian economy, Gonzalo sometimes (perhaps necessarily) downplays the contestations and variation, especially in regional terms, and one critique of this book would be that the interregional differences in economy, but also in culture, politics, and society, are not well addressed.

Turning to the third section of the book, called “Demand-Led Growth,” chapters 7, 8, and 9 take us to the modern day and the Indian economy as we see it now. Having established the building of the Indian national innovation system (but saying very little about the various regional innovation systems present), these final chapters focus on the growth of the consumption amongst the rapidly growing middle and upper classes, the huge growth in service exports via the Indian IT sector, and the role of Indian diaspora (particularly in the US and Gulf States) and remittances in the contemporary Indian economy. India is profiled as a growing economy and also geo-political power, something of an east–west crossroads guardian. Donald Trump and Narendra Modi are illustrated in a tight handshake, and Indian (and other nations) military bases in the region are mapped to help us conceptualize this central global position as India has moved back from the “periphery” to the “core” yet again. This section contains a large number of tables, graphs, and facts and figures about the modern Indian economy, but those that stood out to me were on the scale of the Indian ICT sector, the huge housing boom (60 million new homes built from 2015 to 2022—p. 198), and the size of

remittances as a sector of the modern economy. Foreign direct investment inflows peaked in 2008 at almost 50 billion USD (p. 211), but in 2016 India recorded 69 billion USD of remittances inflows.

Via this three-stage logic, Gonzalo manages to condense an enormous amount of economic history and geography into a relatively short book (268 pages in total), which is an impressive feat. In condensing the richness of the case, and imposing a strict storyline, of course some detail and discussion are passed by. However, my reading of the book gave me a significant amount of new information, data, and analysis, and I came away from my time spent immersed in its pages considerably better informed and enlightened about the evolution of the Indian economy and politics to the situation we see today. I particularly appreciated the interdisciplinary relevance of this book: I enjoyed it as an economic geographer, but I can imagine economists, political scientists, and economic historians also finding something to latch onto in Gonzalo's broad-based analysis.

I particularly enjoyed the artistic flourishes, provided by Argentine artist Rosaura Flynn, which really brought the book to life. There was a pleasing mixture of excerpts from previous books, graphs, maps, tables, and images to keep the reader engaged throughout. The language was very accessible, and Gonzalo writes well in English, which, of course, is not his mother tongue. My recommendation of this book is strong. Nevertheless, there are some elements I found to be lacking, from my own perspective. As a regional economic geographer, I couldn't help but get frustrated at times as the regional differences were glossed over. I also felt that the NSI perspective was overplayed occasionally, although, in fairness to Gonzalo, he had stated at the outset of his book that this would be one of the central tenets of his analysis, coming from the Latin perspective on NSI theoretical development. Gonzalo's training in the REDESIST group at UFRJ and the influence of Cassiolato is there to see, which is not necessarily a weakness of the work but could potentially be a turn-off to readers ambivalent towards the NSI approach. While the Latin American foundations of the book and its perspective are strong in the introductory sections, these peter out somewhat towards the end, and I came away from the book feeling that it is more a story of Indian economic development than a Latin American-flavored economic analysis per se. I feel convinced by Gonzalo's aim to expand South–South analysis and discussions, and would very much enjoy a counterpart offering from an Indian scholar analyzing the Latin American economic development in response.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares no competing interests exist.