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In *Science and Environment in Chile,* Javiera Barandiaran explores the relationship between science, knowledge, politics and democracy in Chile. She focuses on a rather narrow tool – environmental impact assessments, and how they are used to assess, improve and approve projects that could alter the natural environment – to draw out a story that has far wider implications about trust, facts, accountability, and the precise role of the state in the environment and society. Focusing on the post-dictatorship era (although as with any issue in Chile, the current era is never entirely post-dictatorship) this book traces how the state sets up such EIAs as a technical matter, and places itself as a neutral umpire within society, judging not what kind of society and environment should be created, but whether particular processes comply with the laws. Yet what counts as technical here is profoundly political, as the process of building the necessary scientific knowledge is outsourced to consultancies and universities. Knowledge becomes privatised, to be purchased from the market. No assessment commands universal trust, with no shared version of the facts, and different kinds of scientists elicit different levels of trust. Contradictions emerge between private science and the public interest within a democracy, in which the state positions itself, as several of Barandiaran's respondents note, not even as an umpire in a contest, but as an inanimate object within the contest, such as lines on a pitch or a net. The book draws on science and technology studies and theories of the state, but does so in an accessible way.

Chile is an interesting case, as usual, because it is seen as a pioneer of neoliberalism and of position the state as a neutral umpire. The implication is that what happens in Chile could be repeated elsewhere. The book begins by exploring how the EIA process was created in Chile in the early 1990s, and how the particularly Chilean vision of the role of the state was encoded within structures of how the state should act with regards the environmental impact of developments. This sets the book up nicely for an exploration of four case studies – salmon aquaculture in the Patagonian fjords, the controversial Celco Arauco paper mill in Valdivia, the Pascua Lama gold mine in the high Andes, and the HidroAisen hydro-electric project in southern Patagonia. These are well known and well-chosen case studies. They are all high profile instances where the EIA process was deeply contested. Each represents an instance of a large investment which aimed to convert Chile's natural resources into economic growth, but which ended up in controversy and environmental problems. They have all contributed to a lack of faith in the EIA process, and some levels of reform to the whole process, although the role of knowledge and the state remain largely unchanged.

Although each of the case studies have been studied elsewhere by several scholars, there is added value from considering them together. It produces a clear picture of the position of the state and knowledge within environmental regulation in Chile. Whilst each case study played out differently, with different actors and contests, there are also remarkable similarities that strongly support the book's overall conclusions.

The focus on the EIA process produces a coherent and well-structured book, although it does mean that other controversies over the role of official science and expertise in Chile, such as those relating to native forests and plantation forests, are not explored. This is a minor limitation, and the book has clear broad implications.

The introduction and conclusion include remarks about fake new and alternative facts in the US and UK, as an example of what can happen when there is a loss of common faith in the facts, and the implications for science and democracy. Whilst this is broadly similar to the themes of the book, it is slightly incongruous, given that the rest of the book is about very particular forms of science in a particular context. It is also somewhat unnecessary – the Chilean experience is fascinating in itself.

Overall, this is an excellent book, which is well written. It should be very useful reading for anyone working on environmental issues or issues of knowledge and regulation in Chile. Its utility crosses borders, as it can help understand contests on environments and expertise in other countries, particularly those which have taken a markedly neoliberal approach to environmental regulation.

George Holmes

University of Leeds