light on the successes and difficulties of implementing the changes outlined in the new constitution and building a 'plurinational state' and a 'plural economy'. However, while the notion of *Buen Vivir* is touched upon throughout the book, its meaning to Bolivians and the contradiction that exists between the concept and Morales extractivist policies could have been explored further.

This book is a welcome addition to the vast literature on Bolivia. Crabtree and Chaplin move beyond the romanticism that is typically associated with the Morales administration and critically assess the dramatic changes that have taken place in Bolivia. The book is easy to engage with and in its prose and presentation is suitable for undergraduates and postgraduates interested in both Bolivia and contemporary social movements and class struggles in Latin America today.

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Jean-Paul Faguet, *Decentralization and Popular Democracy: Governance from Below in Bolivia* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2012), pp. xi +358, $85.00, hb.

Jean-Paul Faguet's latest book addresses one of the most substantive questions someone interested in politics must deal with: can democracy be simultaneously a responsive and efficient system of government? This superbly-written book dismisses any trade-off between the two elements, defending the position that genuine and extensive decentralisation, combined with favourable local conditions, can produce both the responsiveness and efficiency that citizens demand from democracy. In order to make the point, the book studies the decentralisation reform launched in Bolivia in 1994. Faguet properly places the reform in the immense literature on decentralisation and analyses it with an array of methods, from sophisticated econometric models to impressive qualitative research, that includes more than 300 interviews, conducted over more than a decade of research.

The book starts by highlighting the fact that the decentralisation process initiated in the 1994 *Ley de Participación Popular* (LPP) was a major disruption to a traditionally centralised state in its creation of more than 300 municipalities. Drawing on an impressive database covering the whole country, Faguet shows that the quality of local government improved immediately after the first election of mayors under the new LPP regime. Not only were huge resources directly allocated to new local governments but new authorities radically altered the way those resources were spent. Whereas the central state used to privilege spending on infrastructure and productive sectors, local governments overwhelmingly switched to human capital investments such as education, health and primary services, the sectors that citizens tend to rank as their highest priorities. That is, local government immediately became more responsive to the citizenry's needs. This is the most important empirical finding of the book which is statistically well-proven in Chapter 1 and confirmed with an econometric model in Chapter 4.

However, even if statistical and econometric analysis demonstrates that local governance generally improved in Bolivia after the LPP, this is not tantamount to saying that every local government's governance and resource management improved. As Faguet reminds us with lucid scepticism, the extensive literature on decentralisation

shows that positive and negative cases coexist everywhere, with no conclusive evidence on what drives failure and success. In order to tackle this question the author proposes to study a positive and a failed case of good governance in Bolivia immediately after the LPP was adopted. Viacha, an important town in La Paz department near El Alto province, developed an inefficient, corrupt and irresponsive local government. The second case, Charagua, is a rural district in the eastern Chaco region that saw the emergence of a responsive, efficient and well-run government. This detailed qualitative contrasted comparison (almost one hundred pages) placed amid the decentralisation literature allows Faguet to infer a general theory of good decentralised local governance.

Faguet's central claim is that the effects of decentralisation actually depend less on the reform itself than on the social context in which it is implemented. Based on the premise that there are good and bad conditions for decentralisation, Faguet proposes a two-step, context-sensitive theory: 1) 'Where local politics are nourished by a diverse, heterogeneous local economy and an active civil society rich in organised groups, political competition will tend to be open and substantive'; 2) 'local government responsiveness and accountability are primarily the product of the openness and substantive competition of its politics' (both quotations from p. 218). This model seems to explain quite well the contrasting outcomes of Charagua and Viacha in 1997.

Yet the proposed theory is more successful because of what it rejects than what it puts forward. Especially in the domain of public policy, but also for a long time in comparative politics, researchers abused arguments for institutional reforms as the main independent variables for political phenomena. Faguet rightly criticises those society-insensitive approaches and correctly highlights the fact that other variables, the economy, local politics, civil society organisation, might better explain political outcomes than a single institutional reform. In a nutshell, local context is crucial. However, once the institutional formal approach was defeated, the context-sensitive theory proposed in the book has its own flaws.

My first concern is that the idea that responsive and accountable governments are more likely to occur where the political competition is open and substantive does not seem particularly challenging. Actually, one could almost suggest some level of endogeneity among the factors. My second concern arises from the author's findings when he returns to Viacha and Charagua in 2009 to see how these cases developed since his account of 1997. While Charagua continued on its previous trajectory of responsible and efficient local government, Viacha's previously dismal situation had reversed and it had become a solid case of good local governance. It is unclear how the processes driving these two cases fit with the theory. Charagua follows the argument quite well: a dense and developed civil society brings open competition that fosters good governance. Yet, the Viacha case, 'a remarkable transformation' (p. 243), does not seem to properly follow the general explanation. Faguet's description suggests a responsible mayor is crucial for the governance improvement, but the general model does not provide room for voluntaristic individual-level accounts of political change. Moreover, one of the two large enterprises that dominated Viacha's economy in 1997 had left by 2009. Less economic heterogeneity coexisted with an improvement of governance, even though the theory predicted the opposite.

Actually, the main mechanism behind improved governance in Viacha seems to be a general learning process where every actor (politicians, electors, civil society organisations) gradually internalised and institutionalised the new decentralisation regime. Hence, the successful transformation of Viacha seems linked to practices launched by the institutional reform rather than by social conditions as Faguet persuasively

had argued in the theoretical chapter. Viacha is a case where the LPP seems to have gradually produced good governance by transforming civil society, rather than a case where distinctive solid civil society drove the LPP into good governance.

My third concern results from the tension between a society/economy-driven theory and an empirical institutional-driven approach that reappears in the book's conclusions. Through the preceding chapters, the author has mainly argued that the success of decentralisation lies in contextual conditions rather than in the reform itself. Yet, suddenly, causality seems to reverse in the conclusions: 'In Bolivia decentralization turned passive residents into engaged citizens …' (p. 279); 'Decentralization led to major changes …' (p. 281); 'The local dynamics that it [decentralization] set into motion proved virtuous, not only permitting good cases of local governance to improve but spurring distorted cases to heal themselves' (p. 284). At this point the reader wonders where the explanation lies: is it in the peculiar Bolivian social conditions or in the virtuous formal reform that Sánchez de Lozada launched in 1994? The tension becomes clear when the author summarises the positive institutional aspects of the LPP that might be 'replicated elsewhere'. As a result, readers closing the book wonder how the particularistic comparative politics argument turned into a universalistic public policy approach.

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Ursula Durand Ochoa, *The Political Empowerment of the Cocaleros of Bolivia and Peru* (New York, and Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. xv +230, £62.50, hb.

Among the major coca-growing Andean states, and across Latin America more generally, Bolivia is increasingly recognised for its role in the hemisphere's burgeoning 'New Left'. Less widely recognised is that Bolivia's *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) government has deep roots in coca-growers' defence of their land and coca crops, a movement that gained much initial momentum through contesting the violent militarisation of the Chapare coca-growing region as part of the 'war on drugs'. If Bolivian coca growers were able to counter constructions of themselves as criminals, and leverage their collective identity as '*cocaleros*' (peasant coca producers) towards formal national political ends, why has Peru's cocalero movement achieved only minimal political gains? This is an underlying question in Durand Ochoa's book, which considers how and why cocalero movements in Peru and Bolivia differed, and also how cocaleros leveraged their positions as social actors into roles in formal state politics. *The Political Empowerment of the Cocaleros of Bolivia and Peru* appears as a timely contribution to contemporary scholarly debates surrounding the insensitivities and unintended consequences of supply-side drug control policies, and also the mutually constitutive relationship between movements and governments in the region.

The book is organised into seven chapters. In Chapter 1 Durand Ochoa emphasises her interest in the role of identity formation in the 'contentious politics' of cocalero movements through two phases: the formation of social movements, followed by their transformation. She proposes to explain the political empowerment of cocaleros as a question of contentious politics, and uses an analytical framework primarily developed