The situation of the Latin American legal avant-garde may not be that different. To name one just case, Gros Espiell's work on international developmental law and the right to development is much less cited than other contributions, despite being one of the first and most comprehensive studies. The reasons for the lack of visibility of Latin American scholarship may be multiple: geopolitics, language, coloniality, epistemic communities; yet one senses it is part of the story in *Ruling the Law*, for it occludes the emergence of a strong and confident Latin American legal scholarship. Thanks to Esquirol's contribution, we have better tools to understand how we think about Latin American laws and the relationship between this thinking and the lack of sensitivity to the local context. From here, multiple options for research open up, including how Europeanness, legal failure, and Latin American emancipatory projects relate and represent each other in different places and contexts.

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Francisco Sánchez and Simón Pachano, eds., *Assessing the Left Turn in Ecuador*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. Figures, tables, abbreviations, appendix, bibliography, 403 pp.; hardcover $149.99, paperback $109.99, ebook $84.99.

Rafael Correa's ten-year presidency transformed Ecuadorian politics in multiple ways. Following a period of political instability, when three democratically elected presidents could not complete their terms, the successful rise of Correa was a surprise to many observers of Latin America. Fifteen years ago, Correa was a relatively unknown figure who came second in the first round of the presidential elections. By the time he left office, Correa had rewritten the constitution, won two landslide victories in presidential elections, and become one of Ecuador's longest-serving chief

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executives. Even after Correa moved to Belgium, he never took a back seat, and continued to defend his legacy over social media on a daily basis. In the most recent presidential elections, Correa's proxy candidate, Andrés Arauz, won the first round with a comfortable margin but narrowly lost in the runoff to Guillermo Lasso, indicating the polarizing nature of *Correísmo*.

Despite the proliferation of studies that consider the Citizens' Revolution as a case study of left-wing populism, the Pink Tide, the Socialism of the Twenty-first Century, and the Bolivarian governments, until the publication of *Assessing the Left Turn in Ecuador*, there were virtually no books in the English language that provided a comprehensive account of the Correa decade (2007–17). In that sense, Francisco Sánchez and Simón Pachano's edited volume makes a key contribution to the literature and contains 15 chapters written by political scientists, sociologists, economists, and anthropologists. The book's interdisciplinary focus makes it appealing to a diverse group of academic audiences and practitioners.

Within the framework of the left turn, the authors address key regional and comparative themes that not only explain Ecuador's trajectory but also could shed light on Venezuela, Bolivia, and other South American countries. In this regard, one of the unifying themes of the book is Correa's personal dominance of Ecuadorian politics through a combination of institutional design and charismatic appeal. John Polga-Hecimovich's chapter describes how Correa successfully passed a hyperpresidentialist constitution and creatively interpreted the constitutional limits to his power. In the chapter, Polga-Hecimovich details how Correa reasserted the state capacity, created new government agencies, and generously used his decree power. Likewise, Felipe Burbano de Lara's chapter investigates Correa's deliberate strategy of state building by traveling to distant parts of the country and physically representing the state in the previously forgotten periphery. Analyzing the president's weekly TV show and cabinet meetings that were held outside of the traditional center, Burbano de Lara convincingly argues that Correa showcased Ecuador's regional diversity and promoted national integration as the embodiment of the state.

Carlos de la Torre's chapter conceptualizes this personalistic leadership style as technocratic populism, since the Citizens' Revolution centered on Correa and a close circle of postneoliberal experts with PhDs, limiting bottom-up participation and mobilization of the masses. As the editors rightly point out in the introductory chapter, the excessive focus on Correa later turned out to be a liability for the survival of the Alianza PAIS as a political party. When Lenín Moreno turned against his predecessor, the ruling party quickly disintegrated and lost its relevance.

Another common theme that appears throughout the book is the role of the state in the economy, a departure from the neoliberal era. As a staunch critic of "the long and sad night of neoliberalism," Correa substantially increased the size of the public sector and underlined the significance of planning to achieve development. As Polga-Hecimovich and Burbano de Lara both document, during the Correa decade, the number of ministries and government agencies skyrocketed. In their coauthored chapter, Augusto de la Torre, Simón Cueva, and María Alexandra Castellanos-Vásconez describe Ecuador as a regional outlier, due to the size of the govern-

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ment within the GDP (43 percent) and the share of public investment in total investment (50 percent).

Although the authors acknowledge the impressive amount of economic growth, poverty reduction, and decrease of inequality, they attribute those favorable numbers mainly to the magnitude and the longitude of the commodity boom, rather than Correa's policies. As an exporter of oil, bananas, shrimp, and cacao, like many other Latin American countries, the Ecuadorian economy experienced a boom in the mid-2000s. This allowed Correa to redistribute the abundant oil revenues through conditional cash transfers and investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. It is not surprising that in the last two years of the Citizens' Revolution, against a backdrop of low oil prices, street protests, a devastating earthquake, Correa asked his followers to judge the government based on *La Década Ganada* (The Won Decade) rather than the more immediate economic performance.

In their overall analysis of the decade, multiple contributors to the book identify corruption and authoritarianism as the two main shortcomings of the Correa administration. In his chapter, César Montúfar utilizes the concept of state-organized crime to describe institutionalized corruption in Ecuador, especially in the so-called strategic sectors. In the absence of effective mechanisms of horizontal accountability, Montúfar draws attention to the proliferation of corruption cases that were linked the Operation Car Wash and the Panama Papers. Carlos de la Torre, similarly, declares that "Correa wasted resources, used state funds to keep winning elections, and relied on corruption to cement the loyalty of his clique" (108).

Although these observations on corruption are accurate, they overlook Ecuador's poor record before Correa's election. According to Transparency International, in 2016, Ecuador was ranked the 120th least corrupt country in the world out of 176 countries. In 2006, the ranking was 138th out of 163 countries. The latest version of the Varieties of Democracy dataset also supports this observation, as Ecuador's regime corruption score virtually remained the same before and during the Correa years. Among the presidents of the Socialism of the Twenty-first Century, this trend is comparable to Bolivia under Evo Morales and differs from the uptick in regime corruption in Venezuela and Nicaragua under Hugo Chávez and Daniel Ortega.

In the introductory chapter, Sánchez and Pachano offer a brief discussion on whether Ecuador under Correa should be classified as a diminished subtype of democracy (illiberal, delegative, and plebiscitary) or a hybrid regime (competitive and electoral authoritarian). The editors do not take a clear position on this question but recognize that Ecuador's regime type "remained within the field of democracies and stopped short of authoritarianism" (8). Among the contributors, Carlos de la Torre, Montúfar, and Carmen Martínez Novo explicitly categorize Ecuador with adjectives of authoritarianism rather than democracy. De la Torre particularly refers to the slow death of democracy, which resembles other instances of democratic backsliding in Latin America and the rest of the world during the third reverse wave.

What is clear to me is that mainly due to the repression of the media and civil society, Ecuador under Correa gradually moved in an illiberal direction but fell short of a full-fledged autocracy. While the *anti-Correísta* opposition remained regionally

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and ideologically fragmented, Correa did not necessarily win the elections because he was authoritarian but simply because he was popular in the midst of an oil boom. It is also worth mentioning that among the Bolivarian presidents of the Andean region, Correa is the only leader who peacefully stepped down and passed the presidential sash to a democratically elected successor. This decision was a strategic mistake for the movement but ended up boosting the Ecuadorian democracy under Moreno. Four years later, the *anti-Correísta* opposition successfully consolidated around the candidacy of Lasso in the runoff and prevented the return of *Correísmo* for the time being.

Besides corruption and authoritarianism, the contributors provide valuable insights on topics as diverse as gender; social movements; indigenous organizations; education, science, and technology policy; and foreign policy analysis. In all these areas, the authors reveal a discrepancy between discourse and practice, where the left-wing ideology mattered less compared to Correa's pragmatic interpretation of what was necessary at a given time. For instance, in their chapter on the indigenous concept of *buen vivir* (good living), Antonio Luis Hidalgo-Capitán and Ana Patricia Cubillo-Guevara describe how the original focus on decoloniality, postcapitalism, and biocentrism eventually lost its substantive meaning and simply became three marketing slogans for the government. In the same manner, Grace Jaramillo demonstrates that Correa's foreign policy made several references to anti-imperialism and sovereignty when actual practices often contradicted those principles.

Given the results of the 2021 presidential and legislative elections, *Correísmo* remains a resilient but polarizing force in Ecuadorian politics. With the election of Lasso, Correa's opponents finally have the chance to prove that they can overcome corruption, rebuild democratic institutions, create jobs, and achieve sustainable development. In that sense, Sánchez and Pachano's edited volume contains several lessons for students of Latin American politics, especially for scholars who work on the complex legacies of the Pink Tide governments.

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Brian Crisp, Santiago Olivella, and Guillermo Rosas, *The Chain of Representation: Preferences, Institutions, and Policy Across Presidential Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Tables, figures, appendix, bibliography, index, 262 pp.; paperback $39.99.

Students of Latin American politics have long been troubled by the disconnect between policymaking and voter preferences, a detachment commonly attributed to a variety of circumstances—be they highly volatile parties that disappear around the time those elected on the party's platform swear into office, presidents who shift their policy stances to the opposite end of the ideological spectrum once elected, or low legislative re-election rates that curtail retrospective voting, among other rea-

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