Latin American Research Review (2023), 1–11
doi:10.1017/lar.2023.28

LARR Latin American Research Review

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Indigenous and Popular Struggle for Realist Utopias in Bolivia and Ecuador

Bret Gustafson

Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, US
Email: gustafson@wustl.edu

This essay reviews the following works:

The Sovereign Street: Making Revolution in Urban Bolivia. By Carwil Bjork-James. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020. Pp. 304. $55.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780816540150.

Social Movements and Radical Populism in the Andes: Ecuador and Bolivia in Comparative Perspective. By Jennifer N. Collins. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021. Pp. 299. $120.00 hardcover. ISBN 978-1-4985-7233-0.

La izquierda latinoamericana contra los pueblos: El caso ecuatoriano (2007–2013). By Pierre Gaussens. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Investigaciones sobre América Latina y el Caribe, 2018. Pp. 390 paperback. ISBN 978–607–30–0489–3.

Water for All: Community, Property, and Revolution in Modern Bolivia. By Sarah T. Hines. Oakland: University of California Press, 2021. Pp. 320. $85.00 hardcover. ISBN: 978–0520381636.

Indigenous Revolution in Ecuador and Bolivia, 1990–2005. By Jeffery M. Paige. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2020. Pp. xix +330. $65.00 hardcover. ISBN: 9780816540143.

Del sueño a la pesadilla: El movimiento indígena en Ecuador. By Fernando García Serrano. Quito: Editorial FLACSO Ecuador, 2021. Pp. xvi + 259. $18.00 paperback. ISBN: 9789978675519.

Pachamama Politics: Campesino Water Defenders and the Anti-Mining Movement in Andean Ecuador. By Teresa A. Velásquez. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2022. Pp. 288 $55 hardcover. ISBN: 9780816544738

Candidate Matters: A Study of Ethnic Parties, Campaigns, and Elections in Latin America. By Karleen Jones West. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. x + 228 $74.00 hardcover. ISBN: 978–0190068844.

© The Author(s), 2023. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Latin American Studies Association. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution licence (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted re-use, distribution and reproduction, provided the original article is properly cited.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In recent decades, Andean Indigenous movements have been major political protagonists in Ecuador and Bolivia. Movements have helped topple unpopular regimes and elect progressive leaders, they have spearheaded radical constitutional reforms, and they have struggled with the contradictions of left-leaning governments. The works reviewed here grapple with the multiple complexities of this ongoing history, as movement ideologies, strategies, and visions of change have challenged the state but also unsettled academic categories of analysis. By the same token, Indigenous movements and demands, often aligned with leftist governments (and often not), have sparked debates about the Left and the continued dependence on development models based on natural resource extraction. A historical moment that was first talked of as a multicultural turn, and then of Indigenous revolution and plurinationalism, has seen significant shifts, particularly in the challenge to the colonial and racist structures of these states. Yet there has also been a retrenchment in older forms of politics, particularly in the stubborn durability of party systems. The range of approaches reflected in these books grapples with these complexities, revealing the challenges not only to older forms of statecraft but also to academic categories and conceptual frameworks themselves.

The historical narratives on the rise of Indigenous organizations traced in some of these texts will be familiar to scholars of the Andes. Since Albó's early foundational text on the "return of the Indian," scholars writing from the Andes have long been politically engaged in these processes themselves, seeking to shape the direction of progressive change, often alongside the movements themselves and as often in very difficult political conditions.[1] Northern scholars have followed these processes and sought to explain what has variously been framed as a "resurgence" or "revolution," situating Indigenous politics into one or another framework of the academy. The relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state had long shaped anthropological and historical inquiry, but these organizations began to appear as something new alongside the expansion of discourses on Indigenous rights and the emergence of interculturalism or multiculturalism as a new way of talking about state policy and democracy in the neoliberal era.[2] A second generation of scholarship took a closer look at the complexity of state-Indigenous relations and struggles on the terrain of neoliberal multiculturalism, asking questions about the construction of new forms of knowledge, the entanglements between Indigenous organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the impacts that neoliberal policies—including land reform, decentralization, and bilingual education—had on Indigenous struggles, and vice versa. Paradigms for talking about indigeneity were also undergoing a shift, as questions arose over whether these were "ethnic" politics or "racial" politics, and about the relationship between indigeneity, class, race, and territory.[3] As neoliberalism in the 1990s began to crumble as a result of the failures of free-market policies and the increasing strength of popular movements, a new period emerged in which

[1] Xavier Albó, "El retorno del indio," *Revista Andina* 9, no. 2 (1991): 299–366. For an earlier work that set the stage for the resurgence of the 1980s and 1990s in Bolivia, see Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Oprimidos pero no vencidos: Luchas del campesinado aymara y qhechwa de Bolivia, 1900–1980* (La Paz: HISBOL, 1984).

[2] See, e.g., Donna Lee Van Cott, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America: The Evolution of Ethnic Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Deborah Yashar, *Contesting Citizenship in Latin America: The Rise of Indigenous Movements and the Postliberal Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Kay Warren and Jean Jackson, eds., *Indigenous Movements, Self-Representation and the State in Latin America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Amalia Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance: The Ecuadorian Andes in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

[3] See, e.g., Nancy Postero, *Now We Are Citizens: Indigenous Politics in Postmulticultural Bolivia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006); Bret Gustafson, *New Languages of the State: Indigenous Resurgence and the Politics of Knowledge in Bolivia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009); Nicole Fabricant, *Mobilizing Bolivia's Displaced: Indigenous Politics and the Struggle over Land* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Raúl Madrid, *The Rise of Ethnic Politics in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Indigenous peoples and organizations joined other popular movements to topple unpopular regimes and even occupy spaces of power within the state, as in Ecuador, or help win majorities in the legislature and occupy the presidency itself, as in Bolivia, with the election of Evo Morales and the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party in 2006. Yet in some ways, as one author here suggests about Ecuador in particular, what seemed to have been a dream of growing political successes may have turned into a nightmare of internal breakdown and the stifling of political visions. The victories of Indigenous organizations and left-leaning governments appeared to signal the death knell of neoliberalism and the opening of new spaces of possibility and power for Indigenous peoples. Yet the reality was more complex, at times pitting Indigenous movements against left-leaning governments, at times subsuming them into new relations of subordination to the state, and at times blurring what seemed like once clear visions of political transformation. The political panorama had shifted, although many of the analytical and political questions remained the same: How had we gotten to this point, and what, in fact, has really changed? What emerges in the juxtaposition of these new texts are insights into the similarities and differences between Ecuador and Bolivia and the advances and limitations of these struggles. In addition, the juxtaposition of methods and categories of analysis are revelatory of the limits of inquiry and the opening of new areas of debate.

Hines's *Water for All* is the most explicitly historical of these texts, and it offers a good starting point for recognizing the longer histories of struggle that continue to shape the movement trajectories. Hines delves into the archives tied to the decades-long struggle over water in parched Cochabamba, the heartland of Quechua agriculturalists that would be the epicenter of the 1952 revolution, and later—thanks to its proximity to the coca growers who gave rise to Evo Morales—a center for the militant opposition to neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s. Cochabamba was the site of the Water War of 2000, during which rural and urban Cochabambinos challenged and brought down a proposal to privatize the water system. In Bolivian movement narratives, this was the first of three or four great uprisings that led to the fall of neoliberalism after the Gas War of 2003. Yet in Cochabamba, water wars of various sorts had been unfolding since the 1870s. The geography of the city is such that water sources are concentrated largely in the mountains north of the city, giving rise to a long history of feudal appropriation and subjugation of peasant farmers who were forced into dependence on the landlords for both water and land. As the city expanded and agriculturalists and city dwellers sought access to these water supplies —whether through canals and ditches or, later, piped water systems—the tension between private control and public need multiplied. Water dispossession went hand in hand with land dispossession, and a struggle for democratization of access to water became a primary motor of various movements, Indigenous and otherwise.

Hines's analysis highlights a central issue behind many of the movements that would erupt across the Andes. Privatization policies paradoxically ripped power from the state, which popular organizations saw as one of the avenues for securing access to water. Yet the oligarchs were also highly organized and often in control of the state itself. The perennial challenge for the poor was to find ways to pry open spaces of negotiation to challenge what Hines calls the *hacendado* water monopoly. At times leaders showed some interest in expanding access to water, such as the David Toro (1936–1937) and Germán Busch (1937–1938) regimes after the Chaco War. In those periods, the state made tentative moves to expand access to water. Hines recounts how Bolivian engineers traveled to Lázaro Cárdenas's Mexico to get ideas about water engineering projects. Yet as might be imagined, military leaders like Toro and Busch, and those who came later, had some sympathy for movement demands but were as much concerned with staving off radical revolutionary change (in this case demands for land reform) as they were in fulfilling a revolutionary project of redistribution.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Hines traces these struggles over water through Bolivia's revolution of 1952 and the days of neoliberalism in the 1990s, which saw President Hugo Banzer's attempt to sell off Cochabamba's water system to the French corporation Bechtel. Banzer, like all neoliberal politicians, was attempting to squeeze a loan out of the Inter-American Development Bank, conditions of which were that the state raise water rates and privatize the system. A complex alliance of urban workers, everyday residents, and rural water users emerged to challenge the move, and the privatization scheme failed. But here again, there is no easy victory for revolutionary struggle. The tensions between rural farmers and urban dwellers, as well as the complicated historical forms of water ownership and control—at times intensely private, at times in cooperative-like arrangements, at times in wholly neighborhood-built water systems—sets up a struggle that was about class and spatial inequality but also deeply riven by other lines of tension. Cochabamba's water struggles continue today. Yet what was clear was the contest between a vision of state and society in which there might be achieved a "popular hydraulic society"—water for all—or a society built on private monopolies held by the rich and rooted in the rhetoric of "economic profitability," the neoliberal dream (150). In broad strokes, these long-standing patterns continue to shape the politics of struggle in both Ecuador and Bolivia.

Carwil Bjork-James's *The Sovereign Street* delves further into the politics of struggle in Bolivia during and after the collapse of the neoliberal governments. Bjork-James is interested in learning from Bolivian movements, seen as offering an inspirational case of popular resistance in a wider global era of struggles ranging from Occupy Wall Street to the Arab Spring. For Bjork-James, Cochabamba's Water War, among other moments of "unarmed militance" against neoliberalism, was a "precedent and prototype" for the later mobilizations that would bring down the neoliberal regime of Gonzalo "Goni" Sánchez de Lozada in 2003. As with *Water for All,* Bjork-James draws our attention to the centrality of race and space, since the "occupation of public space" (citing Castells) was central to the wave of mobilizations that spread around the world in the early twenty-first century. Here the questions are not so much about political parties or institutional reforms, but about how people are able to disrupt the exercise of power. In Bolivia this involved a challenge to systems of exclusion built on class, race, and space—where being a racially marked subject, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, or otherwise—long meant exclusion from various public spaces, be it the central square, the sidewalk, or the spaces of the state itself.

The Sovereign Street offers an ethnographic perspective on the movements that followed the Water War, as well as the tensions that would arise between these movements—some identifying as Indigenous, some not—and the government of Evo Morales. Against those who view Indigenous movements as somehow preternaturally violent (a colonial and racist trope), Bjork-James's notion of unarmed militance offers an important reminder that these organizations are almost invariably nonviolent (and frequently subjected to violence from the state). To illustrate this—and to offer a primer to others who might learn from it —*The Sovereign Street* offers a fine-grained analysis of unarmed militance in practice. Bjork-James goes into great detail about the different ways one might block a highway or organize logistics for protest march, the nitty-gritty of popular struggle in Bolivia that often goes unanalyzed. Here one gains a better sense of the deeply rooted organizational discipline and practices that underlie Bjork-James's claim that "Bolivian social movements have some of the most effective and interesting practices of political action in the world" (24). What also becomes clear is that the street and the urban centers of power are central focal points of political struggle where state sovereignty and peoples' rights are both asserted and opposed. If "popular hydraulic sovereignty" was the aspiration of the Water War, then the "sovereign street" signals a parallel form of democratization in which a state once seen as the private domain of white Bolivians can be transformed into a space for all.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Teresa Velásquez's *Pachamama Politics* is a richly documented study of antimining movements in Ecuador that illustrates significant parallels with both of these books on Bolivia. Velásquez follows the rise of movements in defense of water, most of them led by women, some Indigenous and some not. A number of important insights emerge. The first is that non-Indigenous organizations and communities are increasingly sharing a language of struggle derived from Indigenous ideas, in particular those surrounding the Pachamama (roughly, Mother Earth) and the need for more reciprocal relations between humans and other-than-human living beings, like water itself. That women come to be leaders of movements in defense of water and against mining is tied to the fact that mining projects are at once masculine centered and also undermine daily livelihood struggles. Women have also borne the brunt of state repression. As such, what is revealing about Velásquez's ethnography is that ideas associated with indigeneity are able to bring heterogeneous political actors together, in "a 'defense of life' movement—a new brand of Indigenous cosmopolitics that brings together activists across lines of race, class, gender, and political ideologies to defend community watersheds and collective and individual lands from mineral extraction" (7). This type of analysis offers a good example of how politics and research might transcend the more static frames tied to multiculturalism or ethnic politics, which often have presumed the existence of more stable lines of difference and political identity and interests between Indigenous peoples and others.

The second insight, which reemerges in the works discussed here, is that of the deep contradiction between the progressive-sounding politics of the Rafael Correa government (2007–2017) and the state's defense of the mining industry in the face of this opposition. It is by now familiar to students of the Andes that Correa waged a low-intensity struggle, often marked by criminalizing or incarcerating leaders, against Indigenous movements and environmentalists throughout much of his time in office. Whether or not this disqualified Correa from being labeled a "progressive" is the fodder for much debate, and similar tensions also surfaced during the presidency of Evo Morales in Bolivia. Velásquez describes how Correa's government largely disregarded its own constitutional invocations of *buen vivir*, plurinationalism, and the rights of Pachamama, choosing instead to expand extractive activities and pursue legitimacy through some redistributive policies aimed primarily at urban popular classes. Yet an interesting parallel with Hines's *Water for All* is seen here, that conventional left visions of state-led development rooted in extractive economies can undermine struggles for real change. They can also undermine radical nonliberal visions of citizenship rooted in ideas like Hines's "popular hydraulic sovereignty," or what Velásquez calls "water autonomy," that is, the possibility of place-based heterogeneous communities joining together across lines of race, class, and gender—and against neoliberal or neo-extractive logics—to "defend life."[4]

A step removed from these ethnographic and historical studies, the other texts take more generalist and comparativist approaches to Bolivia and Ecuador, through different methods, frameworks, and styles of writing. With a unique approach to the history of Ecuador's and Bolivia's Indigenous movements, Jeffrey Paige offers a valuable work of reference to future scholars, a compendium of in-depth interviews with Indigenous leaders and their collaborators. Paige, a sociologist, collected forty interviews with Andean and Amazonian Indigenous leaders and intellectuals. The interviews sought to capture local narratives of political change, understandings of the extent of economic change, constitutional shifts, the ideologies and symbols of the movements, and the relationship between these movements and the left. These included well-known figures such as Felix Patzi,

[4] For a parallel account that echoes many of these arguments, see Carmen Martínez Novo, *Undoing Multiculturalism: Resource Extraction and Indigenous Rights in Ecuador* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2021); Thomas Perrault, "Extraction and Its Others," *Latin American Research Review* 57, no. 3 (2022): 708–718.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Eugenia Choque, Luís Tapia, and Eugenio Rojas from Bolivia, and Humberto Cholango, Luís Macas, Marlon Santí, and Ampam Karakras in Ecuador, among others. Readers familiar with these processes will recognize self-identifying Indigenous (Quechua, Aymara, Kichwa, Shuar) as well as those who do not identify as such, but who were intellectual allies or collaborators, such as Raúl Prada or Luís Tapia, from Bolivia. The result is an opportunity for readers to enter into these conversations, many reproduced at length and verbatim, and to revisit the victories and pitfalls of struggle during the 2000s.

Paige frames the interviews with a contextual scaffolding that seeks to explain the emergence of these organizations as well as the different outcomes of Indigenous struggle in Bolivia and Ecuador. On the first point, Paige's position might strike some as a bit mechanistic. For Paige, "modernity causes indigeneity" (20). By this, he means that liberal citizenship and capitalist individuality were imposed on Indigenous peoples in the middle to late twentieth century, through land reform and the changes tied to agrarian modernization. These imposed pressures "led to the formation of an [Indigenous] political identity" (20), which was later catapulted into national protagonism against the impacts of neoliberalism. Although this explanation is unobjectionable on the surface, because state reforms invariably sparked resistance that sometimes expressed itself in the language of Indigenous demands, some might find the presumed clash between modernity and indigeneity simplistic, since Indigenous political revolts have been a feature of the Andes since around the time the first Spaniard appeared.

Nonetheless, Paige offers convincing insights into the different outcomes in Ecuador and Bolivia. In thinking about Bolivia's relative successes, Paige, citing Amalia Pallares, offers the point that Bolivia's movements were more "materially informed Indianist" movements, whereas those of Ecuador were more "ethnically informed parties."[5] While Ecuador's movements foregrounded 'nationalities' defined around distinct Indigenous peoples, Bolivia's movement discourses were as much nationalist and materialist as they were tied to one or another specific Indigenous identity. In the latter case, this facilitated alliances; in the former, Paige asserts, it limited the capacity of Indigenous organizations to transcend perceived ethnic divisions. So while Pachakutik—the party that arose out of Ecuador's Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE)—might be said to be more like an ethnic or Indigenous party, MAS in Bolivia is most certainly not. As such, Paige writes, the more heterogeneous identity of the MAS as compared to the "nations and peoples" (285) model of Ecuador, lent itself to broader political successes.

In *Social Movements and Radical Populism in the Andes,* Jennifer Collins adds another comparison between Bolivia and Ecuador. Collins's working concept is populism, which she grapples with as a means of comparing the political engagements of Indigenous and other popular organizations in the two countries. Based on several years of fieldwork and residence in Bolivia and Ecuador, Collins's text also recounts the origins of the various Indigenous organizations and political parties, yet it is her engagement with the literature on populism that sets Collins apart. Engaging with Laclau, among others, Collins argues that the "radical populism" of Bolivia and Ecuador emerged because movements were able to create "new popular identities that united popular sectors in opposition to the status quo" (1). Unlike classical studies of populism, which focus on the charisma of a single leader operating in contexts of "weak and unorganized civil societies" (3), Collins suggests that Bolivia and Ecuador are different. Here the movements are strong and relatively autonomous. Rather than charismatic individuals, the movements themselves play the central role. Although charismatic leaders have emerged—Correa in Ecuador and Morales in Bolivia—Collins follows Adolfo Gilly, who argued that the roots were first in the "leaderless multitudes."[6] The leaders would come later. The text is a useful primer

[5] Pallares, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance*, 148.

[6] Adolfo Gilly, "The Emerging 'Threat' of Radical Populism," *NACLA Report on the Americas* 39, no. 2 (2005): 37–45.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

on the debates over populism, whether classical or neoclassical, and the right-wing style as opposed to the "radical populist new left." This latter one, a term used by Collins, is said to have transformative political projects that "required institutional change" combined with the older sense of populist leadership revolving around charisma, an "oppositional rhetoric, anti-elite discourse, and the ennobling of the idea of the 'people' as the legitimate political actor" (9). Focusing on the centrality of "populist" identity-building projects in both countries, Collins then traces the histories of state-movement relations in Bolivia and Ecuador, through the coup that ousted Evo Morales in November of 2019 in Bolivia and the return of the right in Ecuador's 2021 elections. Although the 2020 victory of Evo Morales's party with a new president may suggest that the movements have maintained their support for the MAS, even without its charismatic leader, Collins points out that the schism between Correa and the "ecological-plurinational" wing of the left in Ecuador is so deep that "it will not be easily repaired" (263).

As with ethnic party, the use of populism (radical or otherwise) situates these histories in a particular analytical field and literature, but it does so at the risk of replicating conventional ways of speaking about "Other" kinds of politics. Collins does a good job of pointing out why political liberalism fails in Latin America, and she clearly distinguishes rightist and leftist styles of populism, attributing the rise of both to the destructive impact of neoliberal policies. As Collins concludes, "strong, progressive social movements and organized civil society are society's best bet for being able to channel populist waves in directions that aim to preserve and deepen, as opposed to threaten democracy" (258). Yet it bears mention that invoking populism signals something that is outside the norm, and it implies that eventually the system will (or should) right itself and return to mainstream parties and leaders. Nonetheless, Collins pushes back against those who tend to see "populists" and "ethnics" as antisystemic or antidemocratic threats. One supposes that if the movements of Bolivia and Ecuador can do this work for the academy, then that is normatively good.

A similar tension exists with the category of "ethnic party," deftly explored by Karleen Jones West in *Candidate Matters*, an account of party campaigns in Ecuador. West asks whether ethnic party candidates run for themselves or for their presumed "ethnic" collectivities. Are they in pursuit of policies, in an ideological sense, or are they in pursuit of the possibility of delivering patronage to clients, in the good old-fashioned political sense? Spoiler alert: there is a little bit of both. But West argues that ethnic politicians are much like other politicians, such that the presumably radical difference between ethnic parties and others has been overwrought. This is a valuable corrective to stubborn frameworks in the literature, particularly those that presume deep cultural divisions between Western and Indigenous political actors. Such differences exist, to be sure, but to project them into the field of party politics uncritically is to make a grave mistake. This usually lends itself to romanticizing Indigenous politicians as the bearers of some utopian millenarianism or, on the other side, to racializing them as somehow biologically and historically unfit for participation in modern democracy.

West's mixed-methods approach is also unique. Although West does a fair amount of counting votes and considering electoral outcomes, she also tagged along with several political candidates, some identifying as Kichwa, some as their Ecuadorian allies. She watched as they held gatherings in small towns and villages; traveled by truck, bus, or boat to remote areas; and handed out gifts to potential voters, from T-shirts to chickens to cups of grain alcohol. With an ethnographic sensibility, West grapples with the more formulaic ways of thinking about candidates and party politics. It is well known that old-fashioned politicians hand out things and promise to deliver goods to get votes, but was it the case that Indigenous politicians would do the same thing? Well, yes. The purely ideological candidate was rare—and more often than not, the ideologues did not tend to be an organically situated Indigenous leader. Rather than interpret this as some flaw or impurity

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

in Indigenous politics, West offers the pragmatic conclusion: "simply because a party employs clientelism does not mean that it also completely forgoes its attempts to connect with voters on the basis of policy," and, we might add, vice versa (211). And although it is apparently not obvious to all, the fact that some politicians organize around an ethnic identity is not bad for democracy. Following Van Cott, West confirms that even if they could not "buck the trend of clientelism," ethnic parties were able to have normatively positive impacts on democracy. These included a widened discussion of Indigenous rights and the opening of space to critique the limitations of the "nondemocratic and problematic agendas" of other parties (211).[7]

This mixed-methods approach—counting votes as well as following the campaign trail—is a great model for a political science that takes the possibilities of ethnography seriously. Yet this also complicates many of the categories used for analysis, in particular the somewhat problematic concept of ethnic party. Is Pachakutik an ethnic party? Well, to the extent that its leadership and support base in large part self-identifies as belonging to one or another Indigenous people, perhaps. But a number of the Pachakutik candidates who make up West's sample are not in fact Kichwa or Shuar but refer to themselves as mestizos. For strategic or ideological reasons they support Pachakutik, but they are not Indigenous. In fact, as García Serrano points out in his own account of the rise of Pachakutik, more on which later, Pachakutik was explicitly formed out of a decision that it would *not* be only an Indigenous political party, "that is to say, an ethnic party" (86). So when ethnic party is applied to Pachakutik, what kind of work is the qualifier *ethnic* doing, despite its only oblique utility for thinking clearly about Pachakutik itself? And if we are to call Pachakutik ethnic, then why not acknowledge that most of the so-called traditional parties of both Bolivia and Ecuador were also ethnic parties in that they represented the interests of the Spanish-speaking white minority elite, and often with somewhat more ethnic and racial clarity and conviction than some putatively Indigenous led movements are doing for themselves today. Perhaps a more useful phrasing might be "movement-led" party.[8] This is not to take away from West's rich analysis, which indeed exposes these contradictions of the category "ethnic party" and to which end the text does its most powerful work.

García Serrano offers another fine-grained analysis of Pachakutik—known also as MUPP, after its full name, Movimiento de Unidad Plurinacional Pachakutik. Foreshadowing his conclusions with his title—from dream to nightmare—García traces several points at which confrontations with the state and failures in the movement led to the stark division between the movements and the government of Rafael Correa. García Serrano attributes the phrase "from dream to nightmare" to Yaku Pérez Guartambel, who was Pachakutik's presidential candidate in the contentious elections of 2021, which he lost to the neoliberal banker Guillermo Lasso. Pérez Guartambel used the phrase at an event in 2015, when the Correa government had already distanced itself from Pachakutik, its onetime ally, and retreated from commitments to Indigenous rights and concerns. This was clearest in areas of oil and mining, where Correa's commitment to extractivism ran roughshod over Indigenous and other community concerns about water and environmental impacts, as described by Velásquez in *Pachamama Politics*. At that time, the movements had already concluded that Ecuador's constitution, despite its green and plurinational veneer, held many "traps" for Indigenous peoples (observers have said the same of Bolivia's own plurinational constitution).

García Serrano argues that Correa's disregard for ecological and Indigenous concerns had much to do with the broader political and economic context. It was in part about oil, the price of which collapsed in 2014, spurring Correa's deepened commitment to mining as

[7] Van Cott, *From Movements to Parties in Latin America.*

[8] Santiago Anria, *When Movements Become Parties: The Bolivian MAS in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

a source of state revenue. Yet the conflicts with Correa went back farther. CONAIE had backed Luís Macas against Correa in the 2006 elections and did terribly. Correa recognized CONAIE's relative weakness at the time and went on to marginalize CONAIE from the state. CONAIE's response was to mobilize, which led to the criminalization of Indigenous leaders and further distancing. García Serrano suggests that in the early years Correa was able to use the strength of oil prices to maintain his popularity and did not need CONAIE, whose own popularity had receded in the eyes of much of the public. Later measures tied to the expansion of oil development and the regulation of water, as well as moves to weaken NGOs, further alienated sectors of the ecological and Indigenous Left. As such, the dream had turned into a nightmare.

García Serrano goes on to analyze the governing style of the MUPP in various provinces, offering new insights into how these movement-based parties actually govern once in office. As with West's work on campaigns, this is a much-needed, fine-grained look at how politics really works in practice. A component of both analyses is another political dynamic that Pachakutik (MUPP) shared with other Ecuadoran political parties: the reproduction of a patriarchal political system. García Serrano points out the relatively low numbers of women elected to office on the MUPP ticket, most of these at the local level. West also draws attention to the different campaign styles of women who were running for office with Pachakutik, most of whom were concerned about issues of health care. García Serrano, following Manuela Picq,[9] describes the emergence of movements within movements, such as the Dolores Cacuango School of Formation of Women Leaders in the Amazonian ECUARUNARI or the CONMIE (Consejo Nacional de Mujeres Indígenas del Ecuador), founded in 1996. Echoing a similar tension in Bolivia (which also has parallel women-led movements), these organizations have fought for bodily, cultural, and territorial autonomy in the face of opposition from male leaders of the wider movement. In this sense, and again echoing Karleen Jones West, the point might be that Pachakutik, far from being radically ethnic, is too much like the old-fashioned political parties, whether for clientelistic practices or its adherence to the same patriarchal mold of the mestizo parties and the colonial forms of the state (García Serrano, 95–96).

Another critical take on Ecuador is offered by the Mexican sociologist Pierre Gaussens in *La izquierda latinoamericana contra los pueblos.* Going all the way back to 1848 and also 1968, Gaussens traces what he calls "antisystemic movements" and their emergence in Latin America. These, he suggests, are both a rupture from the old syndical (labor union) model and distinct from the new social movements in the countries of the core (the Global North). These are contexts shaped by the politics of dispossession rather than the expansion of consumption, movements based on basic needs rather than postmaterialist values, on the lack of consumption rather than the critique of consumption (88). Invoking theoreticians ranging from Bourdieu to Zibechi, Gaussens offers a counterpoint to the category of "populist," looking specifically at the political-economic context that shapes the emergence of an antisystem politics in the Global South.

Gaussens's sociological interests draws attention to elements that other accounts of this recent history lack. Of interest, for one example, is a chart sketching out the educational and social capital of various political leaders of Correa's Alianza País, including Correa, Alberto Acosta, and other notables. Gaussens points out that they are all economists with postgraduate studies in Europe and, as such, are university professors with a combination of ascetic and aristocratic urges, observations that might strike close to home for some readers of this review. His point, developed through a dense analysis of the limitations of this kind of "leftist" leadership, is that this "vanguardia dominada de los dominantes"

[9] Manuela Picq, "The Inheritance of Resistance: Indigenous Women's Leaderships in Ecuador," in *Indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorians Facing the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Marc Becker (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 71-94.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(177), is nonetheless also wedded to an inherent conservatism. Gaussens suggests that by virtue of their ambiguous status as elites, they sometimes side with the dominated but they are as interested in making concessions to subaltern groups to reduce their danger to the system as they are to changing the system itself. (Here we have echoes of Busch and Toro and other reformers described by Hines in Bolivia).

To do justice to this four-hundred-page analysis would require much more space than this review allows. Yet Gaussens arrives at conclusions that are familiar, with echoes of critiques made by Raúl Zibechi.[10] The basic point is that this "Left" has not broken free from capital, but rather has created a new "pact between the grand owners of capital and the new administrators of the State" (367–368). What is different is that this new arrangement is no longer centered on US foreign policy but on the internal politics of the Latin American states, and "in particular with the new subimperial power on the continent, Brazil" (368). This entails a new kind of dependency as well as an older structural dilemma: an extractive economy. Leaders like Morales and Correa, in this sense, did as much work to assuage popular demands and co-opt or stifle social movements to ensure the continued workings of capital, a point clear in Bolivia's commitment to the gas industry as well as Correa's to oil and mining.[11] Here, again citing Zibechi, Gaussens points out that "non-capitalist social relations and non-state powers that empowered the movements can also enthrone in power the forces that intend to legitimate the state and expand capitalism" (17). Gaussens points out that the "left turn" was largely about the reinvestment of the state in national markets, seeking to implement a number of "Keynesian style policies linked to the interests of a fraction of the dominant class" (19), which in turn were in contradiction with the autonomous logics of the movements or a more radical challenge to the capitalist order.

These books together offer rich insights into the differences between Bolivia and Ecuador but also into the errors of leftist leaders and the movements. In Ecuador, the problems of the movement were at once part of its own history and characteristics, such that it was not able to mobilize an "interclass project at the national scale" (García Serrano, 94). In addition, and unlike Morales in Bolivia, Correa did not need the ongoing mobilized support of CONAIE and was able to marginalize it from certain spaces of the state that had been gained through hard-fought battles, such as bilingual intercultural education. Going further, Correa continued to antagonize and criminalize the leaders, creating a conflictive and largely counterproductive division that created space for the return of the neoliberal right in 2021. In the Bolivian case, these books remind us of the inherent tensions between the exercise of state power and the flourishing of autonomous social movements.

If recent events in Colombia or Chile are any evidence—where plurinationality, the battle over the sovereign street, and the eco-territorial turn have also taken root and led to progressive electoral advances—the struggles in Bolivia and Ecuador have not merely been cases of one or another general form; they have inspired political possibilities and realist utopias elsewhere in Latin America. Here it is useful to follow Gaussens, who is neither dismissive of the kind of Left represented by Morales and Correa nor distraught about the future. Gaussens argues instead that a clearheaded, self-critical analysis of this type is necessary to open the possibility of new resistances. Along with Maristella Svampa, and echoing the movements described by Teresa Velásquez in *Pachamama Politics*, Gaussens sees new possibilities in eco-territorial movements challenging the ecological crises

[10] Raúl Zibechi, *Dispersar el poder* (Guadalajara, Mexico: La Casa del Mago, 2006).

[11] On Evo's commitment to gas, see Bret Gustafson, *Bolivia in the Age of Gas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020). For an overview of other tensions among social movements, the state, and capital in Bolivia, see John Crabtree, "Assessing Evo's Bolivia: Inclusion, Ethnicity, and Class," *Latin American Research Review* 55, no. 2 (2020): 379–390, and on Latin America more broadly, Anna Krausova, "Latin American Social Movements: Bringing Strategy Back In," *Latin American Research Review* 55, no. 4 (2020): 839–849.

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press

provoked by capitalism, whether under the old Right or the new Left.[12] Here opens a new set of questions: How do space-based movements shaped by eco-territorial concerns articulate with class-based struggles waged primarily in urban spaces over the "sovereign street"? Can the Left find an alternative to extractivism? Will political parties continue to the be the main instruments of national struggle, despite their limitations? How might these movements grapple with the resurgence of a neofascist Right, also seeking to hold the streets? In whatever case, these new movements will depend on the creation of realist utopias and imaginative strategies for getting there. Figuring out how scholarship in the North and South can better engage and sustain these utopias is the challenge.

Bret Gustafson is professor of anthropology at Washington University in St. Louis. He is author of *Bolivia in the Age of Gas* (Duke University Press, 2022) and *New Languages of the State: Indigenous Resurgence and the Politics of Knowledge in Bolivia* (Duke University Press, 2009).

[12] Maristella Svampa, *Consenso de los commodities: Giro eco-territorial y pensamiento crítico en América Latina* (n.p.: OSAL, CLACSO).

Cite this article: Gustafson, Bret. Indigenous and Popular Struggle for Realist Utopias in Bolivia and Ecuador. *Latin American Research Review*. https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28

https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2023.28 Published online by Cambridge University Press