

that the notion of a divided Ukraine is a “kind of myth, based on a dichotomous rendering of certain statistics that obscures the middle ground of which he tapped” (24). They invoke three concepts to advance this thesis: civic identity, rally effects, and generational effects.

Ukrainians, they argue, have developed a civic identity in which “people identify strongly with their country not because it represents any specific ethnic, linguistic, or religious group but because it represents an inclusive vision of the citizenship as a whole” (24). Ukraine’s previous politicians, including Zelensky’s rival Petro Poroshenko, stressed regional, ethnic, and linguistic issues as means of building support in one region or another. Zelensky, they show, rejected both the narrative and the political tactic and did so in his comedy programming long before he became president.

The salience of this civic identity was driven, Onuch and Hale contend, by the rise of an “independence generation,” born roughly between 1975 and 1985: they were born under communism but came of age in post-Soviet Ukraine. Members of this generation remember communism, the transition from it, and the chaos of the 1990s but take independent Ukraine in its post-1991 borders as a fact of life.

A third key factor is “rally effects,” in which people unite during a time of crisis, causing a surge in a leader’s support. The rallying around the flag that Ukraine experienced after Russia’s invasion, the authors claim, was rooted specifically in the civic notion of Ukrainian nationality that Zelensky both advocated and personally embodied as a Russophone Jew from Ukraine’s southeast.

*The Zelensky Effect* compellingly and innovatively combines political reporting, analysis of Zelensky’s TV show *Sluha Narodu* (Servant of the People), discussion of extensive survey data (in 48 pages of figures), personal recollections by Onuch, and even a playlist that comprises a soundtrack to the book. The first section of the book (chapters 1–4) summarizes the argument and presents Zelensky’s biography in parallel with Ukraine’s recent political history. The second section (chapters 6 and 7) focuses on the “Zelensky effect” as Zelensky became president and wartime leader. The final section considers Ukraine’s “future history” after the war.

Although Onuch and Hale clearly admire Zelensky, they state that “our argument is not that the man made the country, but that the country made the man” (37). Yet the book’s title and much of the evidence imply that causal arrows point in both directions. Generational effects and public attitudes about national identity were, at least before Zelensky’s election, beyond his ability to influence. The benefits he derived from them reflect his political savvy and his innovative communication methods. Similarly, any Ukrainian leader was likely to benefit from a rally-around-the flag effect after Russia invaded. But Zelensky’s actions are likely responsible for

the scale of that effect—a roughly 50-point increase in his approval rating after the invasion. Not every leader would have turned down the US offer to evacuate the country or done so with such a memorable phrase: “The fight is here! I need ammunition, not a ride” (242). His daily messages to his people, his cultivation of foreign leaders and audiences, and even his wardrobe all contributed to making him an effective wartime leader and an international celebrity.

Can Arel and Driscoll’s view that Ukraine was a divided country be reconciled with Onuch and Hale’s argument that this was a myth? Doing so requires acknowledging what we might call “the Putin effect.” Although both books, for good reasons, foreground Ukraine’s agency, the key outcomes cannot be adequately explained without Russian actions. Russia’s invasions in 2014 and 2022 helped reshape Ukrainian identity and rescue Zelensky’s flagging popularity. As Onuch and Hale show, and as Arel and Driscoll acknowledge, Russia’s 2014 invasion delegitimized the version of Ukrainian identity that saw Ukraine and Russia as close relatives, pushing Ukraine decisively out of reach. That, in Putin’s eyes, necessitated the invasion of 2022, which has likely done more to consolidate Ukrainian solidarity than anything the shrewdest politicians in Kyiv could dream up.

Whenever this war ends, the issues raised in these two books will be newly relevant. Can Ukraine integrate populations that have been governed by Russia for months or years without reopening new debates about language and identity? Can the unity forged during the war be sustained when normal democratic politics returns and issues such as reform and reconstruction need to be tackled? The resolution on these issues will provide the longer-term measures of the Zelensky effect.

#### **The Politics of Investment Treaties in Latin America.**

By Julia Calvert. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 272p. \$115.00 cloth.

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— Daniela Campello, *Fundação Getúlio Vargas*  
daniela.campello@fgv.br

The rapid spread of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) during the 1990s prompted a great deal of academic inquiry aimed at understanding factors driving this phenomenon and examining its implications for the economies of developing countries. These initial investigations delved into the rationale behind countries’ decisions to sign and ratify BITs, the underlying criteria guiding partner selection, the role of international financial institutions (IFIs) in facilitating their diffusion throughout the 1990s, and the efficacy of BITs in promoting foreign direct investment (FDI). Overall, research on these

matters remained largely inconclusive, probably because countries frequently entered into BITs without a full grasp either of their potential benefits or associated costs.

In her recent book, *The Politics of Investment Treaties in Latin America*, Julia Calvert asserts that Latin American governments only came to comprehend the costs associated with BITs in the wake of an unprecedented surge in claims filed against host nations in the 2000s. She argues that those claims, in some cases involving a significant share of countries' GDP, generated opportunities for political learning that informed governments' reform preferences, at the same time that they mobilized influential social forces into favoring and opposing international investment agreements (IIAs): IIAs is a more encompassing term that refers to both BITs and investment chapters in free trade agreements.

Although investment claims have resulted in a significant decrease in the number of new agreements, this trend obscures the diverse approaches to IIAs observed in Latin America. On one end of the continuum, the Ecuadorian government of Rafael Correa violated and subsequently terminated IIAs and disengaged from the jurisdiction of the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In sharp contrast, successive governments in Peru responded to investor claims by adopting institutional measures that not only bolstered adherence but also expanded the range of safeguards for investments. Argentina is an intermediary case, in which the Kirchner and Fernández's administrations froze the country's IIA programs and refused to pay awards not ordered by national courts, but did not consider terminating BITs or abandoning the ICSID.

Calvert contends that prevailing theories that posit countries as FDI maximizers, consequently motivated by considerations of international reputation, fall short of explaining why some governments are more willing (and able) to infringe and to reform their treaty commitments. These theories anticipate that governments will steer clear of violating IIAs, and in instances where such breaches occur, they will attempt to regain their reputation through even stronger compliance.

Calvert's alternative explanation centers on programmatic beliefs and normative ideas that delineate policy makers' understanding of what is appropriate and desirable conduct concerning investors. It draws on the concept of "policy horizons," defined as the "range of actions that governments perceive as acceptable and feasible given the domestic and global circumstances they confront" (p. 23). Governments' interpretations of IIAs and subsequent claims, the author argues, are shaped by how well their policy horizons fit into the policy space that IIAs provide.

The author uses process tracing and comparative case study analyses to argue that, in Peru, governments that valued a liberal investment market and robust property rights were more inclined to function within a policy

framework that aligned with the policy space allowed by IIAs. This alignment explains governments' tendency toward limited and inadvertent breaches of contracts, as well as their diminished impetus for reform. In Ecuador and Argentina, conversely, governments embraced economic intervention and valued sovereignty and autonomy above international reputation. As such, they perceived as legitimate those actions that surpassed the policy space provided by BITs and were therefore more likely to infringe IIAs and eventually terminate them. Other factors such as economic conditions, state capacity, and social pressures are also considered in the explanation of patterns of infringement and reform.

After delineating her theory in the opening chapters, chapter 3 reviews the history of investment treaties in Latin America: it shows that perspectives on FDI have exhibited significant diversity within the region, culminating in markedly distinct approaches toward investors. The narrative challenges the notion that countries are always competing for foreign investment. It describes how during the mid-1950s—a period marked by the prevalence of import-substitution-industrialization (ISI) ideologies—instead of actively seeking investment, governments did exactly the opposite. They crafted policies aimed at limiting the entry of FDI and at increasing state influence in strategically significant sectors. This explains the rise in state-owned enterprises in that period and the frequency of renegotiations or nationalizations of concessions with foreign investors.

It was not until the 1990s that BIT signings began to skyrocket in Latin America; this turnaround can only be understood with reference to normative ideas. After a debt crisis swept through the region, governments were in desperate need of capital, and IFIs pushed market-led development models as a way to attract a rapid infusion of private funds that would lead to long-term macroeconomic stability. It was only when ideas about neoliberal market orthodoxy prevailed in the region that countries actually began to compete for FDI.

The subsequent three chapters present case studies that elucidate distinct patterns of infringement and reform in Argentina, Peru, and Ecuador, respectively. Chapter 7 concludes by providing a summary including a comprehensive discussion of the theory and a thorough comparative analysis of these cases.

Calvert does a great job of showing how normative constructs pertaining to sovereignty and international reputation play a pivotal role in explaining the diverse trajectories that countries adopt in the realm of foreign investment. The challenge of explaining the diffusion of BITs across Latin American states—which had long adhered to the Calvo doctrine and abstained from participating in international arbitration courts—is related to the simultaneous propagation of neoliberal orthodoxy.

The same applies to explaining why Peruvian governments, with a legacy of autocratic regimes, fragmented party systems, and fragile systems of checks and balances, refrained from intervening in natural resource sectors when prices skyrocketed, as Rafael Correa did with the oil sector in Ecuador. As delineated by Calvert, Peruvian administrations accorded paramount importance to upholding their international reputation, perceiving IIAs as not exerting constraints on their policy autonomy. This perspective was facilitated by the establishment of a proficient bureaucracy in Peru, which effectively safeguarded the nation in international courts and insulated the government from associated processes. Consequently, the compensation sought from Peru remained notably lower than that from Ecuador, thereby contributing to a diminished politicization of foreign investment within the country.

In reference to infringement, the Argentine case emerges as distinctive and does not lend itself to a straightforward comparison with Peru and Ecuador. A notable proportion of claims brought against Argentina were instigated by policy measures that the government was compelled to adopt to stabilize the economy after the collapse of convertibility—an economic upheaval not encountered by Ecuador or Peru within the studied timeframe. In a scenario in which both citizens and domestic enterprises suffered the consequences of this crisis, one might question whether any degree of bureaucratic autonomy could have effectively depoliticized foreign investors' endeavors to seek protection from the turmoil.

The case of Argentina also challenges the way ideas are treated as exogenous within Calvert's framework. Duhalde, although not necessarily aligned with left-wing politics, found himself in a circumstance where safeguarding investors from profound economic distress could have potentially precipitated an irreparable economic and political breakdown—regardless of the extent to which Duhalde and subsequently Nestor Kirchner were attuned to international reputation concerns.

This brings me to a second concern regarding the efficacy of normative ideas in explaining variations in reform strategies. After finishing this book, I was still uncertain as to why, in the aftermath of the profound crisis following the end of convertibility, Argentinian governments continued to abstain from exiting IIAs and the ICSID, akin to the course of action taken by Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Given that the normative perspectives held by the Kirchner and Fernández administrations did not markedly diverge from those of Correa, and the constraints stemming from international agreements were notably more conspicuous and subject to politicization, Argentina's hesitancy still merits further explanation.

Overall, however, this is a noteworthy book that should reach an audience beyond students of international investment agreements; it has valuable insights for anyone

interested in the role of programmatic beliefs and normative ideas in policy making.

**The Death and Life of State Repression: Understanding Onset, Escalation, Termination and Recurrence.** By

Christian Davenport and Benjamin J. Appel. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 204p. \$110.00 cloth, \$32.99 paper.

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— Belén González , University of Zurich  
belen.gonzalez@ipz.uzh.ch

*The Death and Life of State Repression* by Christian Davenport and Benjamin J. Appel is an ambitious book based on a simple premise: if we want to effectively prevent the large-scale abuse of citizens at the hands of their governments, we need to better understand how repression starts, escalates, ends, and recurs. However, as the title rightly suggests, this requires nothing less than a full account of the life cycle of violence and a shift in the way we understand large-scale state repression (LSSR). To this end, the authors argue that we need to consider all phases of state violence and how they relate to each other. In their words, we need to study *repressive spells*, one of the book's key innovations.

The book's *juggernaut theory of repressive spells* sees the initial decision to repress citizens as the result of a simple yet cold-blooded cost-benefit calculation by governments (pgs. 31–39). Although this angle matches existing explanations, its innovation lies in the argument that over time the decision to repress can “become institutionalized into diverse policies and the activities associated with them,” making repression likely to escalate and more difficult to end (pgs. 33–35, 154). At the core of this path-dependent process are repressive cohorts: individuals and institutions that have a preference for and derive benefits from maintaining policies of LSSR (pgs. 31–32). In this spiral of violence, only “movements towards democracy” have the ability to slow and ultimately break the process of state violence (p. 37).

Davenport and Appel place democracy at the core of ending spells of repression. Yet, as the book's empirical findings demonstrate, only those attributes of democratic regimes that effectively disturb “cohorts of political authorities and security agents who cohere around policies of state repression/human rights violations” (p. 150) may have an impact on the repression cycle. Other factors, such as civil resistance and INGO involvement, are unlikely to have an effect on their own but may, however, influence repression indirectly through democratization.

Overall, the book follows an intuitive structure. The authors do an excellent job of taking readers on an intellectual journey. The sections on “what have we learned” remind readers of the most important findings, and the book dedicates a final chapter to a reflection on its