

overthrow the reformist government of President Ramón Grau San Martín in early 1934. An extreme case of US interference this was, and one that Wells ably chronicles in Chapter 7 of *Latin America's Democratic Crusade*.

Second, most of these regimes created difficult choices for their opponents. Throughout his book, Wells analyses the informal alliance that existed between dictators to counter the internationalist efforts of the crusaders. Chapter 9 provides a chilling portrait of Trujillo's methods, which were brutal, extensive (he sent assassins abroad to silence his critics), and involved bribery of regional politicians. We could have learned more about other such regimes (e.g. Manuel Estrada Cabrera [1898–1920] and Jorge Ubico [1931–44] in Guatemala or the Somozas of Nicaragua [1936–79]) and about hybrid systems that combined elections with autocracy in, for example, Cuba before Batista, Honduras, Nicaragua before the Somozas, El Salvador before and after General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez (1931–44). And, understandably enough, the competitive systems in Colombia and Costa Rica hardly feature in Wells' book. But comprehending the behaviour of students, intellectuals and politicians – about why they chose, for example, sedition or elections in less than competitive systems – requires learning more about the constraints and opportunities these systems created for employment as well as for change.

The importance of Wells' panorama of the anti-dictatorial struggle of Central America and the Caribbean expands as the distance between us and the twentieth century increases. At one level, *Latin America's Democratic Crusade* is a tale of struggle, dreams and quixotic behaviour between individuals who sometimes fought among themselves almost as much as against the regimes they opposed. At another level, it portrays the international politics in northern Latin America, which is both a period and place about which we lack accounts as ambitious as Wells'. Future research will inevitably return to *Latin America's Democratic Crusade* for its detailed portrait of non-Marxist transnational movements against dictatorship in a region policed by the United States.

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Julio F. Carrión, *A Dynamic Theory of Populism in Power: The Andes in a Comparative Perspective*

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Julio Carrión devotes this work to comparing five populist cases in the Andean region: Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Evo Morales in

Bolivia, Alberto Fujimori in Peru and Álvaro Uribe in Colombia. He aims to develop a theoretical framework and to provide empirical data to explain why and when populist leaders in power erode democracy.

In the initial chapters, he sets out his analytical framework and situates his contribution within the existing literature, posing that the intent of his work is twofold: first, to elucidate the mechanisms by which populist chief executives establish a power asymmetry with the opposition, and second, to explain why some electoral democracies succumb to populist machinations while others survive. He employs a comparative historical analysis, complemented with existent survey data, and, by focusing on domestic political dynamics and stakeholders, identifies the main drivers of the inflection points within the political cycle, from before the election of the leader until the end of electoral democracy. Given that this is a dynamic theory of populism in power, with emphasis on the leader rather than on rhetoric or ideology, Carrión builds on Weyland's 'political strategy' definition of populism rather than on the ideational definition of Cas Mudde or the rhetorical definition of Ernesto Laclau.

In Chapter 3 he identifies the critical events which preceded the emergence of the new political forces, and he skilfully sets the stage by identifying common elements, such as a highly delegitimised political class, corruption scandals and security concerns. This allows him to conclude that 'mass political dissatisfaction' and 'elite disarray' are the conditions that facilitated the rise of populism in the countries studied. Subsequently, Carrión presents in chronological order the phases that leaders must go through if they are to succeed in altering the institutional framework of their respective countries, consistent with the 'dynamic' nature of the theory.

Chapter 4 outlines what he calls the 'Tsunami Moment', when all the candidates who were relative political outsiders, at least on a national level, came from behind in the polls and rode a wave of unstoppable popular support all the way to the presidency. Chapter 5, arguably the most relevant in the book, focuses on the 'Hobbesian Moment', when the populist chief executive seeks to alter the rules of the game to concentrate political power, and society and the political opposition push back, resulting in a 'zero-sum power struggle whose resolution determines the trajectory of populism in power' (p. 103).

He does an excellent job of process tracing how specific actions generate 'macro-level outcomes' (p. 105). By identifying permissive and productive conditions, he concludes that it is the strength of the permissive conditions (mass endorsement of institutional change) and the availability of the productive conditions (use of the state apparatus) that will determine the trajectory the leader will follow: either constrained or unconstrained populism. Morales, Chávez, Correa and Fujimori were victorious in their Hobbesian moment, which allowed them to permanently alter the institutional landscape and concentrate power, creating a 'super presidency' and effectively eroding democracy, as Carrión goes on to convincingly prove in the following chapters. Unlike his peers, however, Uribe was defeated mostly due to constraints set by other institutions (judiciary and legislative) and his lack of a repressive response; hence he did not alter Colombia's democracy.

After establishing who survived the Hobbesian moment and why, Carrión turns his focus to the leaders who were successful. Chapters 6 and 7 centre around the

mechanisms that ensure the concentration of political power in the cases of unconstrained populism that emerged after the Hobbesian moment: 'electoral validation, the transfer of political resource stocks, and the alteration of resource flows' (p. 149). He names these phases 'The Populist Moment' and the 'Reproducing Populism', and here the comparison showcases stark similarities between the cases. In one way or another, the now super-presidents tilted the electoral playing field to the detriment of the opposition and sought to secure indefinite re-election by violating the new constitutions they had enacted.

Of the two main objectives that Carrión sets out to achieve as explained above, it is the first one where this book excels. He presents a detailed account of the critical mechanisms of power concentration, as well as of the causal relationships between those inflection moments outlined in his 'dynamic framework' and the trajectory the populist leader will follow. The dynamic framework helps us to recognise the stages of development of populist movements, thus becoming a useful tool to those studying how to avert the democratic erosion outside the Andes or even Latin America.

In conclusion, Carrión claims that 'unconstrained populism in power leads to regime change whereas constrained populism does not' (p. 207) and supports the universal applicability of this theory by presenting cases outside the Andean region, such as Donald Trump in the United States (constrained populism) and Viktor Orbán in Hungary and Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua (unconstrained populism).

While theoretically his main argument holds, especially when considering the appropriate selection of 'shadow cases' in Chapter 8, empirically the book does not provide such a clear picture. Populism is a contested concept; however, among the cases chosen, the literature generally agrees that Fujimori, Chávez, Morales and Correa were populists. The outlier is Uribe, regarding whom there is no consensus. While some authors mentioned by Carrión argue that Uribe is a populist or a 'neopopulist', others describe him as a career politician with a personalistic appeal who did not break with the established political order (see Steven Levitsky and James Loxton, 'Populism and Competitive Authoritarianism in the Andes', *Democratization*, 20: 1 (2013), pp. 107–36) and, as is shown in Chapter 6, even improved some democratic indicators.

While Carrión acknowledges the debate surrounding Uribe's populist nature, it is not as convincingly settled in this book as he intended. The conceptual ambiguity then poses a critical challenge to its empirical dimension, since Colombia is the only evidence of 'constrained populism' used to support the hypothesis. Was Uribe an example of a constrained populist or was he simply not a populist and hence not comparable to the other cases analysed?

Regardless, this book is a valuable contribution whose framework presents an interesting analytical tool to identify the different stages and mechanisms through which populists concentrate power and the overall evolution of democratic erosion which follows, with application beyond the Andean region.