

choice of moderate, institutional strategies proved vital to preserving Colombian democracy.

The Venezuelan case provides an intriguing counterpoint. In the aftermath of Hugo Chávez's aggressive and polarizing first few years in office, the opposition resorted to radical, extra-institutional strategies, including a coup attempt in April 2002, a general strike launched in December 2002, and a boycott of the 2005 legislative elections. Gamboa convincingly shows that these strategies badly hurt the opposition once they failed, delegitimizing them as a prodemocratic force and giving Chávez opportunities to tighten his grip on key institutions, most importantly the state-owned oil company PDVSA. Gamboa draws this logic out at length, skillfully navigating a complex case and drawing on both interviews with some key opposition figures and other illuminating sources like a database of legislative bills, which help demonstrate the consequences of the opposition's ill-fated decision to boycott the 2005 legislative elections.

Although Gamboa's book makes a strong argument for why and how opposition strategy choice affects the likelihood of democratic erosion, the size of this effect is not quite as clear. Is opposition strategy choice a variable that matters around the margins, increasing or decreasing the likelihood of democratic erosion by a substantively important but nevertheless limited degree, or is it a more decisive variable that outweighs other factors, such that flipping strategy choice alone would be highly likely to lead to different outcomes in a counterfactual universe? At times the book seems to claim the latter, but some of the evidence seems more in line with the former. The Venezuelan case provides a useful illustration. Had the Venezuelan opposition embraced moderate, institutional strategies like their Colombian counterparts, would they have been able to prevent the erosion of democracy? Under the new constitution, Chávez was not term limited until

2012, and attempts to overturn term limits were to be decided by the Constitutional Chamber of a Supreme Court that Chávez had packed with a loyalist majority in 1999. Because waiting out Chávez was never an option, the opposition had to beat him. Yet he was an electoral behemoth in the years when democratic erosion occurred: he was on the ballot four times between 1998 and 2006 (including the referendum on his recall) and won those elections by 16, 22, 19, and 26 percentage points. One of Gamboa's interviewees, the famous politician and intellectual Teodoro Petkoff, suggests that the opposition would have beaten Chávez in 2006 had they only avoided strategic missteps in the years beforehand. That is a hard argument to sustain when you lost 63–37. Although the Venezuelan case provides a vivid example of how opposition strategy choices can backfire and empower incumbents, it may also be an example of a case in which the opposition was doomed no matter what strategies they selected.

Even though these questions about effect size provide food for thought, Gamboa's contribution to the literature on democratic erosion does not hinge on their answers. The book is a welcome corrective to a literature that is otherwise very focused on the actions and activities of would-be autocrats in office. Its typology of strategy choices provides a parsimonious but compelling way to think about the menu of strategic options available to opposition forces. And the mechanisms underlying the theory help us think more systematically about the strategic interactions between incumbents and the opposition, as they figure out how to react to each other's moves on the fly while playing a game with an unreliable rule book. In sum, this book stakes out an important piece of territory in the theoretical landscape and deserves attention from all scholars interested in the dynamics of democratic erosion and survival.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Beyond the Wire: US Military Deployments and Host Country Public Opinion. By Michael A. Allen, Michael E. Flynn, Carla Martínez Machain, and Andrew Stravers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. 272p. \$99.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.
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Although the American foreign basing network is a central aspect of international security politics, there is a lot we do not know about it. Michael A. Allen, Michael E. Flynn, Carla Martínez Machain, and Andrew Stravers have written an important contribution to increasing our understanding of the dynamics of US foreign military presences.

Through a survey of more than 42,000 individuals in 14 states that host US military bases, the authors generated a significant dataset for thinking about the relationship between US military bases and the societies in which they are embedded. Such a comprehensive effort to collect cross-national data is a real step forward in comprehending the drivers of base politics at an individual level. Allen and coauthors rightly frame their contribution as filling a significant gap in how we think about base dynamics. Instead of a macro-level analysis, they are interested in understanding the microfoundations of US hegemony; that is, the interactions at the level of individuals that account for the ability of the United States to station troops in hundreds of bases all over the world. Previous work mostly focused on elite politics and the bargains underpinning basing relationships, or if quantitative, they

relied on highly aggregated data. These works provide crucial insights, but they tend to make assumptions about the societal support that basing relationships may or may not have and therefore arguably miss important dynamics.

Allen and coauthors justify their approach by pointing to what they call the emerging “domain of competitive consent.” Given a general trend toward the increased political participation of publics in policy making, a development mediated in part by the spread of new communications technologies, states—whether liberal democratic or various shades of authoritarian—increasingly rely on the consent of their publics when accepting the presence of a foreign military. Interactions between the foreign military and the host population and how those interactions shape the perceptions of the military presence therefore become critically important in assessing the stability of basing relationships. This emerging factor in basing dynamics is particularly important given the rise of other powers like China that have an expressed interest in expanding their strategic footprint. China has already established a formal, long-term military base in Djibouti, and it is possible that other states might soon serve as hosts to Chinese bases.

As a result, the United States finds itself in a competitive environment for securing military access in which the consent of host populations is ever more central. Unfortunate events that aggravate relations with host populations or result in sustained protests put pressure on host governments to either extract more concessions from the United States or to ask the United States to leave altogether. Conversely, good relations with host populations help the US presence become an accepted feature of everyday politics. This prospect of a more competitive basing space in the near future aligns with my own thinking on the matter, and it ties this work closely to conversations about the sources of international order. Foreign military basing is the backbone of the American-led order, and this order is becoming more and more reliant on countless personal interactions that ultimately provide the political space for basing relationships to exist in the first place.

Through their large sample and sophisticated methodology, the authors tease out some very interesting findings. First, a general finding that validates their approach is that individual experiences with a US military presence have an important effect beyond environmental factors (such as GDP, population, troop level, etc.) on how the presence is perceived. Second, contact between US military personnel and the local population, although it carries with it the inevitability of some negative interactions, has an overall positive impact on the perceptions of the local population of the US presence. In particular, contact with the US military appears to moderate the effect of negative interactions, such as having experienced crime at the hands of US military

personnel. This has two important policy implications. A particularly important one is that the usual practice of base commanders restricting troops to base after incidents with the local population—and indeed the progressive isolation of bases from host populations that the United States has pursued over the years to reduce friction—may actually make the problem worse by taking off the table the positive interactions that mediate negative ones. Second, given the importance of interpersonal interaction, the US military should invest in personnel who focus on developing relationships with the local community.

Allen and coauthors also conducted interviews with a broad range of actors, including policy makers, US troops, and anti-base activists. These interviews are particularly valuable for adding depth to their survey findings. For example, the authors find that not only is the reduction in contact through isolation of the base from the local population probably a bad thing on balance but it also turns out that this isolation allows rumors about what might be happening at the base to take root in the area. Thus, continued contact with the host population not only provides opportunities for positive interactions but also the increased transparency that this kind of interaction provides helps dispel rumors and familiarize the host populations with the activities of the base.

The sheer scale of the data that the authors collected, their careful analysis of it, and the extensive interviews they conducted provide invaluable insight into basing dynamics. Their work is directly applicable to policy questions and is also relevant for IR scholars interested in questions of American hegemony, empire, and the international order more generally. One finding that would benefit from more clarity, however, concerns the recommendation for the nature of the US military presence. The authors argue that a larger military presence is linked with more protests, suggesting that a sizable presence is problematic. At the same time, they recommend against the smaller presences recently pursued by the United States that substitute capital for labor, because “many negative costs will remain while some benefits are lost” (p. 188). One way to perhaps square these arguments is to look more closely at the nature and aims of protests. Allen and coauthors carefully link personal experiences with the propensity to get involved with protest actions, but this is a rough measure. Protests do not necessarily entail demands for a base to be removed or dissatisfaction with the presence as such; more often, they may have as their goal the mitigation of environmental damage or crime. In fact, as Claudia J. Kim and Taylor C. Boas note in their article “Activist Disconnect: Social Movements, Public Opinion, and U.S. Military Bases in East Asia” (*Armed Forces & Society* 46 [4], 2020), anti-base protests focused on issues of national sovereignty resonate weakly with publics compared to those focused on social and

environmental harms. As such, protests might not express a desire for an end to the basing relationship but may rather speak to the integration of the base into contentious domestic politics.

There is a lot of work to be done in extending the analysis of protests as the link between individual experience and possible policy change. This issue, however, goes beyond the survey that Allen and coauthors conducted, so it is really a matter for further research. As it is, they bring so much data to bear on important issues concerning US basing that we will be in debt to their research findings for a long time to come.

On Revolutions: Unruly Politics in the Contemporary

World. By Colin J. Beck, Mlada Bukovansky, Erica Chenoweth, George Lawson, Sharon Erickson Nepstad, and Daniel P. Ritter. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 260p. \$99.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592723001482

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Theorists of revolutions have—until recently—found themselves a little stuck. The much-discussed “fourth generation” of revolutionary theory seemed to have decidedly stalled, and there was—scholars surmised—a need for some deeper thinking about how we might regenerate this scholarly endeavour to take advantage of the novel cases and approaches available to us. Taking up the mantle of such a challenge, Colin J. Beck, Mlada Bukovansky, Erica Chenoweth, George Lawson, Sharon Erickson Nepstad, and Daniel P. Ritter’s *On Revolutions* (2022) constitutes an important step toward progress in our field. The book seeks to revisit some of the underlying assumptions and dichotomies that characterize much work on revolutions, and encourage us to think more dynamically about them.

This is a book for two core audiences: first, scholars of revolution who are interested in exploring their theoretical options; second, students of all levels seeking to get a sense of how current thinking about revolutions differs from what they might find in the classic texts that usually get assigned. In both respects, the book is a great success. Scholars will find the book a stimulating read, and an excellent jumping-off point for formulating novel, challenging ideas. Students will find the book an accessible and engaging read that aptly takes them through many of the key debates they may be asked to reflect upon in class. Readers who are looking for a book that will “spoon-feed” them a singular answer to any of these debates, however, would do well to rethink their approach to the text, if not the topic more broadly.

As someone who teaches about revolutions, I think this book will earn an important place in my lectures and on my reading list. It’s a great “capstone” text to bring everything together at the end of a course. As someone who researches them, I found the book to be cautious in its

proposals and helpful in its mission, yet also provocative in its premises. In the remainder of this review, I will discuss precisely how I understood and responded to the book’s contents, with the intention that prospective readers will get a better idea of where the book sits in relation to other perspectives.

Part 1 of the book uses case illustrations to problematize five common dichotomies: revolutions as social or political (Chapter 1); as agentic or structured (Chapter 2); as violent or nonviolent (Chapter 3); as successful or failed (Chapter 4); or as arising from domestic or international factors (Chapter 5). The conclusion, in each case, is that empirical evidence shows revolutions are generally a mixed bag. All of these sections were stimulating and persuasive, but most ultimately sought to present an empirically engaged survey of a debate, rather than to fashion novel theoretical implements. I think this is a strength of the book: it engages its reader with the nuances of conventional themes, but demands little compliance from them. One is free to go away and make up their own mind at the end of each chapter. This isn’t just good for students, but is a treat for theorists. I found myself energetically scribbling away in the margins of these chapters, delineating precisely how my own interpretation of a case or debate would accord with or differ from the authors’. I emerged with a novel appreciation these debates, and with my own ideas sharpened and nuanced in response.

In Part 2, the authors chart their preferred theoretical, methodological, and ethical path for studying revolutions, and their aspirations for the future of the field. Here, *On Revolutions* advances an unabashedly liberal interpretation of its subject matter, contending that “modern revolution and liberalism were born under the same sign, as twins,” and that “it could be argued that the world’s most revolutionary force over the past two centuries has been liberalism itself” (p. 191). I thought that this construction of revolution as a fundamentally liberal phenomenon seemed a little too sanguine. An alternative interpretation is that it is not liberalism, but democracy, that stands as revolution’s historic twin. When we study the 1789 French Revolution—for instance—we do not find crowds clamouring for a consolidated liberal state, but rather liberalizing efforts constantly hamstrung by the democratic element, whose demands for recognition time and again frustrated protoliberal governance, just as they had monarchical authority. During this period, liberalism had not been codified, and its relationship with both democracy and revolution would look quite conflicted throughout the subsequent century (e.g., see Andrew C. Gould, *Origins of Liberal Dominance: State, Church, and Party in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, 1999).

A consequence of *On Revolutions*’ pursuit of a liberal vision of revolution is that other normative standpoints get short shrift, being lumped into a singular category of “illiberalism,” one so expansive that it encompasses