

economic crises. Throughout, Sarreal shows resourcefulness and creativity in identifying sources, from government documents and statistics to advertisements and comic strips. Her example should inspire other historians of Argentina to make better use of *archivos de redacción*, thematic files of newspaper clippings, photographs and reference materials that were compiled by major newspapers.

The book is well written and well suited to teaching, either in its entirety or using selected chapters. It speaks to many important themes in Latin American historiography, from Spain's polycentric monarchy and Indigenous erasure to immigration and Peronist cultural politics. It also works well as an introduction to Argentina, because, as Sarreal concludes, it 'exposes the deep and enduring tensions [...] between the desire to be modern and "civilized", and the desire for authenticity' (p. 283). One hopes that it will inspire similar analyses linking the history of *yerba mate* and *tereré* (an iced version) to nation-state formation in Paraguay, Uruguay and perhaps even Brazil. Although Argentina now consumes, produces and exports more *yerba mate* than any other nation, the commodity has also played an important role in neighbouring countries' economic and cultural trajectories.

While Sarreal does not have space to fully explore other national histories, she does contribute to an emerging transnational turn in Argentine historiography. In 'Peripheral Interventions in Global History: Toward a History of Argentina outside of Argentina' (*Latin American Research Review*, 58: 1 (2023), pp. 18–31), Juan Pablo Scarfi and Lisa Ubelaker Andrade argue that transnational histories of a 'peripheral nation' like Argentina 'can articulate a global history of that nation' while also enriching the broader historiography on globalisation. Sarreal's *longue durée* approach and her close engagement with Paraguayan history distinguish this book from many other recent transnational histories of Argentina, which tend to focus on post-1880 connections with Europe and/or the United States. Sarreal helps us understand the emergence of the Argentine nation in South American context, with colonial and national Paraguay playing important roles in the story. This example highlights the need for global history to consider regional as well as transregional processes.

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Teresa A. Velásquez, *Pachamama Politics: Campesino Water Defenders and the Anti-Mining Movement in Andean Ecuador*

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On Sunday 20 August 2023, Ecuadoreans went to the polls to elect a new president, following the collapse of the catastrophic right-wing government of Guillermo

Lasso (2021–3). On the same day, two referendums also took place. The first asked voters to decide whether oil production should continue in oil fields located in and around the Yasuni National Park. Yasunidos, the social movement behind the initiative, showed remarkable resilience to force the referendum a decade after the Rafael Correa government (2007–17) blocked it. In the event, 59 per cent of voters supported the referendum, binding the state to cease operations in the oil fields. The second referendum sought to prohibit mining in Choco Andino, a region of extreme biodiversity north-west of the capital city, Quito. The umbrella movement that helped coordinate the initiative (Quito Sin Minería) collected hundreds of thousands of signatures in Metropolitan Quito to hold the referendum, which was backed by 68 per cent of voters.

How can we understand the emergence of and support for these bold environmental initiatives? Teresa A. Velásquez's terrific new book *Pachamama Politics* provides some important answers. Based on long-range ethnographic fieldwork and scholar-activist research, the book centres on anti-mining struggles in the southern Andean municipality of Cuenca. The region's intricate waterscape, vividly captured in the map placed at the start of the book (p. 2), provides the backdrop for these struggles, which intensified during Correa's decade-long presidency. Building on neoliberal mining reforms introduced in the 1990s, which were enthusiastically supported by the World Bank, Correa signalled his intention to expand the mining frontier and follow a neoextractive path of capitalist development soon after taking office in 2007.

One of the large-scale mining projects that his government prioritised was the Quimsacocha / Loma Larga gold mine, which is at the heart of the anti-mining movements explored in this book. Velásquez explains how the Canadian multinational firm IAMGOLD took advantage of neoliberal reforms to secure rights to develop the mine in the early 2000s, despite it being located in *páramo*, high-altitude grassland, which is a vital water source in the Andes. Having committed to take a hard line on mining companies that threatened water supplies during the opening months of his presidency (pp. 49–50), Correa rowed back on his promises and mobilised the state to support the development of the mine (pp. 73–5).

Velásquez explains how anti-mining activists developed, appropriated and utilised 'Andean cosmologies to defend watersheds as central to their life and livelihood' (p. 7). Importantly, this involved 'campesinos who do not necessarily identify as Indigenous but differentiate themselves through their use of cosmopolitics as the basis for organizing broad-based alliances' (p. 7). The 2008 Constitution, the outcome of a long historical process of resistance and innovation, was a key tool in these struggles as it enshrines rights to Pachamama (Art. 71) and includes several other instruments that support environmental activism.

A central point that emerges from Velásquez's analysis is the capacity of water to mobilise and unify people across classes, ethnicities and geographies. In Andean Ecuador, community water associations have been central to this process. These highly diverse organisations, generally known as *juntas de agua* or *sistemas comunitarios de agua*, not only supply drinking and irrigation water to a significant proportion of the rural and peri-urban population, but also create a powerful base for collective mobilisation. In the municipality of Cuenca, community water associations were central to organising local resistance to IAMGOLD and scaling it up to the national level. Local resistance included conducting water tests to

demonstrate the environmental impacts of industrial mining and coordinating street protests and roadblocks. *Campesinas* performed a prominent role in this resistance and, along with urban environmentalists and feminists, established the Frente de Mujeres Defensoras de la Pachamama (Women's Front for the Defence of Pachamama) to coordinate action (pp. 54–6). Its creation, as Velásquez explains, reflected the gendered nature of the anti-mining struggle, with *campesinas* experiencing various forms of discrimination and violence. National resistance was most prominent during the drafting of a new water law, when community water organisations challenged the Correa government's efforts to centralise decision-making in state bureaucracies and violate a 'vernacular right to local autonomy rooted in arduous histories of the construction of community water systems' (p. 7). Blending Andean cosmologies and Catholic (eco) theology enabled anti-mining activists to build a cross-class alliance that united rural and urban constituencies around a shared vision of 'water as life' (pp. 84–110). Evidence of the strength of this alliance came in February 2021 when 80 per cent of the electorate in the municipality of Cuenca voted in favour of prohibiting large-scale mining in watersheds surrounding the city (pp. 189–91). Despite the unequivocal approval of the referendum, the struggle to prevent mining in the region continues, indicating the battles that lie ahead for the Choco Andino and Yasuni initiatives.

Pachamama Politics not only shines light on the growing environmental consciousness that was reflected in these recent referendums, but also on the nature of *correísmo*. By extension, this helps explain why *correísmo* has, so far, been unable to reach out beyond its core constituency of supporters to reclaim the presidency. Among other things, the book documents the litany of threats and abuses that Correa meted out to anti-mining and environmental activists, including personal insults and attacks during his lengthy weekly radio and television broadcasts (pp. 70–2). These discursive tactics, as Velásquez explains, were aimed at constructing the 'enemy' to his political project – the *revolución ciudadana* (citizens' revolution). 'By qualifying the "irrational" activists as unpatriotic, dangerous felons and "civilised citizens" as patriots, he mobilized nationalist language to justify violence against activists' (p. 71). The legacy of this corrosive political strategy is a loyal core *correísta* constituency and a diverse *anti-correísta* block, which includes many individuals, organisations and movements on the left. The line between these two groups is constantly shifting and many voters do not neatly fall in either camp. Yet Velásquez's analysis highlights the political challenges confronted by *correísmo*, especially as it remains firmly rooted in the idolatry of Correa, which limits space for reflection, critique and renovation. The recent presidential elections also show the difficulties progressive forces have faced developing a viable alternative to *correísmo*, with Yaku Pérez, a long-time anti-mining and pro-water activist and key protagonist in this book, only securing 4 per cent of the national vote, having won a much larger share in 2021. *Pachamama Politics* will therefore be of interest to readers who want to understand the complicated politics and legacies of Latin America's 'Pink Tide' of the early twenty-first century, as well as those who have specific interests in activism, water, mining, indigeneity and gender. I hope this important new book attracts the wide readership it deserves.