

version of Islam their parents and grandparents practice and try to impose on them; Muslim lifestyle magazines have emerged and are now dispensing advice on fashion, love, and marriage in a very different way from the conventional route. The Internet has provided a new public space where Muslims can try to negotiate their desire of what Islam should represent to them; they can discuss dating, women's position in society and in the

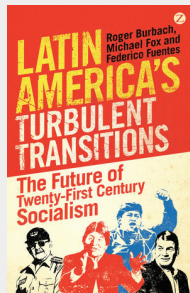
household, being gay and so on. Those who participate in these discussions are actively constructing what it means to be a European Muslim in a variety of spheres of life. Here, the development of technology contributes to a more assertive exercise of agency and to the construction of a new type of community – just as it is observed among non-Muslims, another sign that they are as European as their non-Muslim neighbors.

Latin America's Turbulent Transitions: The Future of Twenty-First Century Socialism

By Roger Burbach, Michael Fox, and Federico Fuentes
London: Zed Books, 2013, 208 pages, \$29.95, ISBN: 9781848135673.

Reviewed by Oya Yegen

THE SURGE of left governments in Latin America since the early the 2000s has not gone unnoticed. The region has made great strides in consolidating electoral democracy since the days of violent coups. With the exception of Cuba, where one-party rule remains and a few short interruptions such as the 2009 Honduran coup and presidential impeachment in Paraguay in 2012, elections have been the norm of acquiring power. One significant outcome of this trend is the expanding ideological spectrum of governments. The center-left and left governments of Latin America are changing the face of the region through the ballot box that once had failed them through armed struggle. The future of the Bolivarian Revolution following Chávez's death, another electoral win for Evo Morales, and the possibility of the reelection for Rafael Correa all raise questions whether the "new left" is here to stay.



A timely contribution by three analysts: Roger Burbach, Michael Fox and Federico Fuentes, *Latin America's Turbulent Transitions: The Future of Twenty-First Century Socialism*, offers its readers a thorough review of the revival of socialism in the region. The book focuses on two processes that are simultaneously taking place and reinforcing one another: the declining role of the United States as the hegemonic power of the region and the promoter of the neoliberal model and the rejuvenation of socialism in Latin America. The authors observe that together these processes are giving rise to growing integration of the region. A main contention of the book is that the contemporary socialism experienced in Latin America is different than the socialist project of the previous era, which was essentially state socialism that produced authoritarian states and has been discredited with the collapse of the Soviet bloc. "21st cen-

tury socialism,” unlike the previous project, embraces the democratic roots and derives its power from social movements. It is this focus on social movements and the bottom-up process, which has produced the new left governments of Latin America that gives a compelling twist to this study.

The social movements all around the region, such as the CONAIE in Ecuador, the Movement towards Socialism (MAS) in Bolivia, the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) in Brazil, Zapatistas in Mexico, *los piquetores* in Argentina, and the student movement in Chile all have different grievances and demand immediate action to their specific issues but they are united under their opposition to global neoliberal model. Born out of this new form of struggle, the left governments of Latin America are intrinsically tied to their social base and employ the state as an apparatus to realize their policy goals. A strongpoint of the book is its analysis of the limitations of left governments to actually deliver on the social needs while working within the parameters set forth by the neoliberal system. Among the cases discussed, the authors give highest claim to Venezuela in its attempt to restructure the economic, political, and social order and construct “21st century socialism,” a phrase first uttered by the late president Hugo Chávez. Given the discredited socialist model, the authors find it understandable that left candidates shied away from openly calling for a socialist economy, as part of their electoral strategy but remain critical of left leaders who did not advance on the transition to socialism and have maintained the capitalist model and kept pursuing a development strategy that is dependent on the extractive model. Rather, the new left governments of Latin America have chosen to operate within the neoliberal economic order and embraced the reliance on primary commodities but are using the rev-

enues generated by the extractive model to invest in social programs.

The book begins with three introductory chapters that offer an analysis of the growing impact of social movements, the challenges that the United States’ hegemonic power encounters in the region, and the extractive model pursued by the left governments. These chapters are followed by case studies on Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Cuba. Each individual chapter gives an expansive analysis of how each left government was elected to power, its relation with the respective social movements and organizations that had mobilized support, the policy changes that have occurred since taking office, its successes and failures in domestic and foreign policy, and prospects for the future. The authors wrap up the book with a rather short conclusion that briefly discusses the shared characteristics of the experiences with socialism in the region and provide an ambivalent but overall optimistic conclusion for Latin America’s “turbulent transition” to 21st century socialism.

Rich in description, however, the volume does not offer a framework to conceptualize the various shades of “the left” observed in Latin America. While the authors in the introductory chapters highlight the diversity seen among the leftist governments of the region and cite different categories introduced by fellow scholars and analysts, they do not offer their own typology. The absence of a systematic classification puts its readers with the task of figuring out what unites and what divides Latin America’s “new lefts.” It is not clear whether it is because a contributing scholar Marc Becker is the author of the chapter on Ecuador and as such has a rather different take on what entails 21st century socialism or for some other reason, Ecuador

does not benefit from the evidently positive attitude offered towards Venezuela and Bolivia. As such, the authors also fail to explain the selection criteria for country studies. While it may be obvious to a student of Latin American studies that Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador are carrying the torch of socialism, Cuba is a peculiar case on its own that is in the process of reforming its state-centered socialism. Further, Brazil's PT governments' advances in welfare programs and its progressive foreign policy that aims to overhaul United States' hegemony and promotes a deeper integration for Latin American countries make each case worthy of discussion. The authors fail to explain why these groups of states are selected for further study while other "pink tide" governments of Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay have not made the cut. A typology or a framework to categorize different left governments or at least a solid definition of 21st century socialism would have been useful.

Although the book offers a critique of left governments where they failed to carry out the promised reforms and did not take adequate steps to replace the neoliberal order, it does not address the most pronounced criticism directed at these countries that these regimes

are pursuing electoral authoritarianism and by relying on rentier policies winning at the ballot box. The fact that authors would disagree with such an assertion should not have kept them from addressing it. Minor issues such as restatements of information and quotes and mention of data without actually providing the exact figures do not cloud the compelling work the authors have put together in evaluating the extent to which Latin America's indigenous communities, urban poor, and landless peasants have initiated a bottom-up process that contests the engrained neoliberal order and the hegemonic power of the Colossus of the North, the United States. It is a must read for anyone interested in the future of socialism, social movements, regional integration, United States' relation with Latin America, identity politics, new forms of struggle, participatory democracy, and economic development models applied in Latin America. It will be of great interest especially to readers that want to acquire a deeper understanding of the current developments taking place in Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Brazil and the historical backdrop that facilitated the rise of "new left" in Latin America in general. *Latin America's Turbulent Transitions* is a testament to slow but incremental change taking place in the region.