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AN AUTHORITARIAN THIRD WAY IN THE ERA OF FASCISM

DIFFUSION, MODELS AND INTERACTIONS IN EUROPE AND LATIN AMERICA

Edited by
António Costa Pinto

ROUTLEDGE

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This book takes a transnational and comparative approach that analyses the process of diffusion of a third way in selected transitions to authoritarianism in Europe and Latin America.

When looking at the authoritarian wave of the 1930s, it is not difficult to see how some regimes appeared to offer an authoritarian third way somewhere between democracy and fascism. It is in this context that some Iberian dictatorships, such as those of Primo de Rivera in Spain, Salazar's New State in Portugal, and the short-lived Dollfuss regime in Austria, are mentioned frequently. Especially during the 1930s, and in those parts of Europe under Axis control, these models were discussed and often adopted by several dictatorships. This book considers how and why these dictatorships on the periphery of Europe, especially Salazar's New State in Portugal, inspired some of these regimes' new political institutions particularly within Europe and Latin America. It pays special attention to how, as they proposed and pursued these authoritarian reforms, these domestic political actors also looked at these institutional models as suitable for their own countries.

The volume is ideal for students and scholars of comparative fascism, authoritarian regimes, and European and Latin American modern history and politics.

António Costa Pinto is Research Professor at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon. His research interests include fascism and authoritarianism, political elites, and democratization. He is the author of *The Nature of Fascism Revisited* (2012) and *Latin America Dictatorships in the Era of Fascism* (2020).

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Contributors

Gabriel Duarte Costaguta is a doctoral student at the Autonoma University of Madrid. He has a bachelor's degree and a master's in history from the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Among his latest articles is "El corporativismo como praxis en la construción del modelo político nacional-estatista en el Brasil de los anos 1930–1945," *Espacio Tempo y Forma*, 31, 2019, pp. 61–82.

Olivier Dard is a professor of modern history at the University of Paris-Sorbonne. He has published extensively on the right in France during the 1930s, corporatism, and the Vichy regime. His publications include *Le corporatisme dans l'aire francophone au XXème siècl*e, *Charles Maurras: Le maître et l'action* and *Célébrer Salazar en France (1930–1974): Du philosalazarisme au salazarisme français* (with Ana Isabel Sardinha-Desvígnes, 2018).

Luciano Aronne de Abreu is a full professor in the postgraduate history programme at the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil (PUCRS), and is editor-in-chief of PUCRS publishers (EDIPUCRS). He is the coordinator of the Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico's (CNPq) Political Authoritarianism and the Press in Contemporary Brazil, and Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Comparative Perspective research groups. He has recently published several books, chapters, and articles on the aforementioned topics in important Brazilian and international journals. His latest English-language book is *Embracing the Past. Designing the Future: Authoritarianism and Economic Development in Brazil under Getúlio Vargas* (2020).

Robin de Bruin lectures in Modern European History at the European Studies Department of the University of Amsterdam. He teaches courses about European integration history, the history of the idea of Europe, modern imperialism and decolonization, democracy in the European Union, 'mental maps' of modern Europe, and (anti-)statism. He publishes on European integration history, Europeanization and domestic change, decolonization and European integration, the history of technocratic governance, and Nazi rule in Europe. His recent projects include a textbook on the history of European integration (with Wim van Meurs, Liesbeth

van de Grift, Carla Hoetink, Karin van Leeuwen and Carlos Reijnen) entitled *The Unfinished History of European Integration*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2018, and an edited volume (with Marjet Brolsma and Matthijs Lok) entitled *Eurocentrism in European History and Memory*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2019.

Rita Almeida de Carvalho is a research fellow at the Institute of Social Science, University of Lisbon. She has a doctorate in history from the Nova University of Lisbon. Her work focuses on the Salazar and Caetano regimes, particularly on political elites and the decision-making process, on the relationship between the state and the Catholic Church, and on public architecture. She is the author of many articles and books on these topics and recently co-edited, with Roger Griffin, the special issue of *Fascism: Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies*: "Architectural Projections of a 'New Order' in Interwar Dictatorships" (2018).

Jakub Drábik completed his doctorate at Charles University in Prague in 2014 and since 2016 has worked as a research fellow in the Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences, while also teaching at the Masaryk University in Brno. The central element of his research interest has been the history of fascism, particularly British and Czech fascism. However, his work covers a broad range of topics, including comparative fascism studies, as well as the history of Central and Eastern Europe in the twentieth century. He is author of three books and many other publications.

Carlos Espinosa is currently a professor of history at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Ecuador. He holds a doctorate in history from the University of Chicago and was a postdoctoral fellow and lecturer at Harvard University. He has also taught at Middlebury College and was director of research at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales. He has recently been a visiting professor at L'École des Hautes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in France. He has collaborated in a number of international research projects, including 'Conservatives and counter-revolutionaries in Ibero-America' (EHESS) and 'Meridional republicanism' (Switzerland). His many publications have explored a number of themes in modern political and transnational history, including political Catholicism, fascism, and nationalism.

Gabriela Gomes is a researcher at the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET) and a professor of history at the University of Buenos Aires and the Universidad Nacional General Sarmiento. She has a PhD in history from the University of Buenos Aires and MSc in Latin American studies from Universidad Nacional San Martín. Her current research is on the social housing policies implemented by the dictatorial regimes in the Southern Cone of South America, as well as right-wing youth and women organizations advocating a corporatist political project in Argentina and Chile. She is the author of *La política social de los*

regímenes dictatoriales en Argentina y Chile (1960–1970) (2016) and several articles of political history in Argentinian, Brazilian, Chilean, and French academic journals.

Aristotle Kallis is a professor of modern and contemporary history at the University of Keele, United Kingdom. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the International Association for Comparative Fascist Studies (COMFAS). His most recent publications include *The Third Rome, 1922–43: The Making of the Fascist Capital* (2014), *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Eu*rope (2008) and *National Socialist Propaganda in the Second World War* (2005). He co-edited *Rethinking Fascism and Dictatorship in Europe* (with António Costa Pinto, 2014).

Rastko Lompar is a junior fellow at the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy for Sciences and Arts. His current research deals with the relationship between religion and fascist ideology in the writings of Dimitrije Ljotić and other ideologues of the Yugoslav National Movement Zbor.

Joachim Lund is an associate professor at the Centre for Business History at the Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. His current research concerns networks and technocratic ideas in Denmark's economic elite during the interwar years and under German occupation. His publications include *Danmark besat: Krig og hverdag 1940–45* (2015); *Samarbejdets mand: Minister Gunnar Larsen – Dagbog 1941–1943*, vol. I–III (ed. with J. T. Lauridsen, 2015); "The 'Aktion Ritterbusch' and the failure of German intellectual propaganda in Denmark, 1940–1942," *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 37 (3), 2012, pp. 329–354; "Building Hitler's Europe: Forced Labour in the Danish Construction Business during World War II," *Business History Review*, 84 (3), 2010, pp. 479–499; "Virksomhedsledelse og den autoritære stat. Knud Højgaard 1878–1968," *Historisk Tidsskrift*, 110 (1), 2010, pp. 117–165; *Hitlers spisekammer: Danmark og den europæiske nyordning 1940–43* (2005); *Partier under pres: Demokratiet under besættelsen* (ed., 2003).

Leo Marić is a professional associate at the Publishing Service of the Department of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, Croatia. He earned his master's degree in history at the University of Zagreb in 2019 with the thesis "The Ideology of the Ustaša Movement and the Social Question." His research interests include the history of social theories and social policies in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Croatia, political elites, and Yugoslav and Croatian nationalism.

António Costa Pinto is a research professor at the Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon. He has been a visiting professor at Stanford University, Georgetown University, a senior associate member at St Anthony's College, Oxford, and a senior visiting fellow at Princeton University, the University of California, Berkeley, and New York University. His research interests

include fascism and authoritarianism, political elites, and democratization. He is the author of *The Blue Shirts: Portuguese Fascism in Inter-war Europe* (2000), *The Nature of Fascism Revisited* (2012), *Latin America Dictatorships in the Era of Fascism* (2020), and he co-edited recently (with Federico Finchelstein) *Authoritarian and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America. Crossing Borders* (2019).

Ana Isabel Sardinha-Desvígnes is an assistant professor at the University of Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris. She has published extensively on the cultural history of the Portuguese radical right, including *António Sardinha (1897–1925): Um intelectual no século* (2006) and *Célébrer Salazar en France (1930–1974): Du philosalazarisme au salazarisme français* (with Olivier Dard, 2018).

Duncan Simpson gained his PhD at King's College London. As a Marie Curie Fellow at the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon, he is currently working on a history of Salazar's political police "from below," combining the methodologies of oral history, opinion surveying, and archival research. Among his latest articles is "Approaching the PIDE 'From Below': Petitions, Spontaneous Applications and Denunciation Letters to Salazar's Secret Police in 1964," *Contemporary European History* (2020).

Acknowledgements

This book is the indirect result of a recent examination of the spread of authoritarian political institutions during the fascist era. Indeed, while developing this study of the diffusion of corporatist authoritarian alternatives to liberal democracy in Europe and Latin America during the 1930s while working as a Remarque Fellow at New York University in 2017, I came across direct and indirect references to fascist-era dictatorships that large sections of the conservative and reactionary intellectual and political elites perceived to be an authoritarian third way that was offered up as an alternative to both democracy and fascism.[1] That was when I first considered developing a research on the influence and spread of the Salazar model, which I was only able to do some years later.

This volume brings together scholars with established international expertise in the crises of democracy, fascism, and authoritarianism in Europe and Latin America, all of whom were invited by the editor precisely because of their national and comparative research output on the diffusion of fascism and authoritarian models during the 1930s. Some of the authors have participated in previous research projects and publications, while others are newcomers. Over recent years, my involvement with academic conferences and research networks in Europe and Latin America, like those organized by the International Association for Comparative Fascist Studies, the International Network for Analysis of Corporatism and Organized Interests, and the Latin American Studies Association, have demonstrated just how important it is, as a contribution to the theme, to debate with a new generation of scholars.

I want to thank all the authors for their active support and encouragement throughout this book's preparation and the valuable comments and feedback from three anonymous reviewers. To conclude, I would also like to thank the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon for its support and Stewart Lloyd-Jones of CPHRC Editorial Services for reviewing and editing some of the texts contained herein.

1 The theme of the diffusion of corporatism in European and Latin America dictatorships of the era of fascism was developed in previous volumes published by Routledge: António Costa Pinto, ed., *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe* (2017); A. C. Pinto and F. Finchelstein, eds., *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Europe and Latin America: Crossing Borders*, 2019.

The diffusion of authoritarian models in the era of fascism. An introduction

António Costa Pinto

When examining new authoritarian political institutions and models during the era of fascism, those most often mentioned throughout the late 1930s are Italian Fascism and German National Socialism. With personalized leadership, corporatist political representation as an alternative to liberal democratic parliamentarism, and the single party as the three main institutional features of the new fascist-era dictatorships, few of them looked to Nazi Germany when crafting their political institutions.[1] Even under Axis rule, when Nazi Germany became the dominant power in occupied Europe during the early 1940s, the institutional design of dictatorships by their authoritarian elites was influenced mainly by examples from elsewhere, often with the relative watchful indifference of the occupant but at times also with hostility. The same cannot be said about Italian Fascism, which was a powerful model for the spread of some institutions, particularly concerning the new corporatist social model contained in the Labour Charter (Carta del Lavoro), which was perhaps the most influential and copied document governing labour relations in the dictatorships of the 1930s.[2] Nevertheless, the emulation processes, political learning, and regime promotion appeared in several interactions and pointed in various directions in the authoritarian "political laboratory" of the fascist era.

When we look at the authoritarian wave of the 1930s, it is not difficult to see how some regimes appeared to offer an authoritarian third way somewhere between democracy and fascism. Moreover, as Kurt Weyland has noted, these regimes were "far more common in Europe during the inter-war years than fascism and communism."[3] It is in this context that some Iberian dictatorships, such as those of Miguel Primo de Rivera in Spain, Salazar's New State (Estado Novo) in Portugal, and the short-lived Dollfuss regime in Austria are mentioned frequently, both indirectly and directly, as being influential in the constitutional projects and political institution designs proposed by intellectual-politicians, parliamentary commissions, and political leaders. Especially during the 1930s, and in those parts of Europe under Axis control, these models were discussed and often adopted by several dictatorships.

This book is the first attempt at a systematic approach to this topic. How and why did these dictatorships on the periphery of Europe, especially Salazar's New State in Portugal, inspire some of these regimes' new political

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institutions? This book tackles this issue by adopting a transnational and comparative research design that analyses the process of institutional reform in selected transitions to authoritarianism in Europe and Latin America. It pays special attention to how, as they proposed and pursued these authoritarian reforms, these domestic political actors also looked at these institutional models as suitable for their own countries.

As a means of capturing this dynamic process, the book has a transnational dimension that addresses the foremost intellectual and institutional actors responsible for the diffusion of the Portuguese New State model through a coherent selection of national case studies from Europe and Latin America: democratic and authoritarian, from a dominant Catholic and non-Catholic subculture; independent countries; and regimes under Axis occupation. Through the development of specific institutional reforms, indicators at critical regime change junctures, and the use of qualitative data from several sources (including party manifestos, constitutions, and constitutional reform proposals; expert commissions; and legislation introducing new political institutions and proposals from intellectual-politicians), this book traces the process of diffusion, its agents, and impact in different national contexts. By testing the diffusion of Salazar's New State empirically, this book seeks to shift the focus from the spread of fascism to the circulation of other authoritarian political models during the interwar period, adopting a relational and institutionalist perspective that examines the processes of ideological, political, and institutional diffusion in Europe and Latin America.

The book

The chapters follow the research outline described above, with the construction of the Salazar model, its followers, and critical reference frameworks as a common thread. In the first introductory chapter, "Looking for a Third Way: Salazar's Dictatorship and the Diffusion of Authoritarian Models in the Era of Fascism," António Costa Pinto sketches an overall analytical portrait of authoritarian models, arguing that Portugal's New State became a prominent model in most of these processes of tension and compromise around the type of institutions to be created. He argues that the diffusion of Salazarism was associated with that regime being perceived as an authoritarian third way at precisely the moment conservative elites were looking for alternatives to both democracy and fascism.

Europe and Latin America participated in the interwar authoritarian wave and established an impressive assortment of dictatorships. In this context of transatlantic circulation and experiences with authoritarianism, he contends, dynamic transnational entanglements between dictatorships and radical-right-wing models created ground that was far more fertile for the flow of ideas and practices shaping the experience of interwar dictatorships than has been assumed.

In the following chapter, Rita Almeida de Carvalho and Duncan Simpson introduce the international stature of the Portuguese New State and its leader, António de Oliveira Salazar, by analyzing the contents of his private library

and the books offered to him, in an approach widely used in the study of other dictators, which involves focusing on the books Salazar was gifted by foreign authors as a representation of the New State's 'standing' as an alternative system of political and socio-economic organization. What did the authors stand for? What made them feel close to Salazar? And why did the Salazar regime appeal to such a broad spectrum of the right-wing intelligentsia?

The following three chapters identify those mainly responsible for promoting the Salazar model in Denmark, the Netherlands, and France and explain how, in the context of the German invasion and occupation, it was debated and proposed as a future collaborationist model of dictatorships. The Danish case is particularly interesting, as it departs from the most obvious pattern of conservative Catholicism. In the chapter "'Salazar's Splendid Dictatorship': Selling Authoritarian Ideas in Democratic Denmark," Joachim Lund follows the reception of the Portuguese New State in Denmark during the 1930s and early 1940s, focusing on three men: Arne Sørensen – leader of Danish Unity (Dansk Samling), which was a political party formed in 1936 and that promoted a third way between liberalism and socialism; Victor Pürschel, a judge advocate general in the Danish armed forces and founder of National Cooperation (Nationalt Samvirke); and on Knud Højgaard, an important businessman involved in extensive construction works in Portugal during the 1930s and who played a leading part in the efforts to replace Denmark's democratic government with technocrat caretakers during the German occupation. Højgaard promoted the creation of corporatist institutions and used Salazarism as his model: ideas that were present in the Højgaard Circle's address to the Danish king on November 14, 1940, in which the monarch was advised to establish an authoritarian regime with the parliament's role reduced to that of an advisory body.

Another democracy in which the basic principles of Salazar's authoritarian corporatism were widely discussed during the 1930s and year following the Nazi invasion in 1940 was the Netherlands. As Robin de Bruin demonstrates in his chapter "Portuguese Salazarism as an Example for a Third Way 'Renewal' in the Netherlands, 1933–1946," Dutch national self-image rather than transnational cross-border exchange explains the importance of Salazar and Portugal in the Netherlands. The popularity of Portuguese corporatism in the Netherlands was mainly associated with the Catholic subculture. A second explanation for the enthusiasm for this model in the Netherlands was the window of opportunity many advocates of the Salazar model saw for the creation of a corporatist regime in the Netherlands following the German invasion and occupation in May 1940.

Another interesting example of the diffusion of Salazarism is that of the Greece of Metaxas, where we enter into the process of institution-making in authoritarian regimes. In the chapter "Unlikely Mediterranean Authoritarian Crossings: Salazar's Portugal as Model for the 4th of August Dictatorship in Greece (1936–1940)," Aristotle Kallis illustrates how and why Salazarism constituted a tried and tested third-way template for radical authoritarian transformation between traditional dictatorship and the then-emerging

radical paradigm of fascist rule. Metaxas personally and many of his regime's public intellectuals and political figures studied the Portuguese regime's nature precisely because of what they perceived to be its flexible political hybridity. The Portuguese regime was regarded as a source of usable political solutions (e.g. institutional formation, social and political corporatism, controlled popular mobilization) for a Mediterranean dictatorship that was socially conservative, paternalistic and respectful of traditional authority. He examines the various channels of interaction between the two regimes from 1936 to 1940, analyzing how the Portuguese regime informed some key aspects of Metaxas's political enterprise.

The diffusion of foreign authoritarian models, from Italian Fascism, German Nazism to Portuguese corporatism, in 1930s France is well-known. In the chapter "Vichy and the Salazarist Model," Olivier Dard and Ana Isabel Sardinha-Desvígnes, highlight the important position Salazar and his regime held within many political and intellectual circles in France during the 1930s: particularly within the nationalist and conservative right. This interest was in no way weakened following the country's defeat by the Nazis and Marshal Pétain's rise to power with the creation of the Vichy Regime. For the regime's traditionalists, Portugal's New State and its leader were leading references on several levels in Vichy France. To this must be added the ideological convergence, which includes the defence of shared values (Catholic and traditional), the designation of common enemies (freemasonry), and the desire to use corporatism to construct a new economic and social system.

The three following chapters examine the radical right in Yugoslavia and occupied Serbia, Czechoslovakia, and the Independent State of Croatia and lead us to more complex territory, both due to the lack of official source (as is the case of the National Fascist Community) and for the Catholic, fascist, and radical-right tendencies, even while corporatism was a common glue.

Rasto Lompar illustrates the Yugoslav case well in his chapter 'Dimitrije Ljotić and Zbor's Corporatist Project for Interwar Yugoslavia" by explaining how Zbor and its leader, Dimitrije Ljotić, advocated a third way and proposed a new radical form of governance through the abolition of all political parties and the creation of a corporatist-based parliament. What they envisioned, and sometimes called 'the state of Zbor,' was a strong authoritarian state ruled by the king and the Zbor party. This change would not be limited to the political sphere since the movement also proposed a complete social transformation. The newly 'reborn' society would have three main pillars: God, king, and homeowners. In his chapter, he analyzes the proposed social organization, investigates its origins, and measures its impact on plans for social organization outlined during the German occupation of Serbia.

In the chapter "Corporatist Models in the Ideology of the Czechoslovak National Fascist Community," Jakub Drábik examines how Radola Gajda, leader of the National Fascist Community (Národní obec fašistická), managed to produce an ideology or political programme that was as coherent as those created in Germany and Italy and how its ideologues, particularly Jan Scheinost, produced relatively complex plans for a future corporatist state in

Czechoslovakia. Scheinost wrote about corporatism as a third way between capitalism and socialism and in so doing drew upon not only the example of Italy but also on his previous inspiration from Catholic circles and, especially, on the country's national history and the romantic notion of the organization of the medieval kingdom of Bohemia into a 'state of estates.'

In his chapter "The Three Faces of Croatian Corporatism, 1941–1945," Leo Marić deals with the Ustasha (Ustaša) regime and its opposing factions, which each had their vision of corporatism. The factional infighting that broke out between various groups of political Catholics, nationalist intellectuals, and trade union leaders, with Ante Pavelić's manoeuvring between them and Croatia's German allies, resulted in institutional chaos and the inability of corporatist institutions to achieve their political and social aims.

During the 1930s, a wave of dictatorships swept over Latin America, each adopting new authoritarian institutions created in the political laboratory of the interwar world.[4] Latin America participated in what has been called the first wave of democratization and in the subsequent reverse wave of the interwar period. Corporatism had its first global moment during this period, and Latin America was an integral part of this political dynamic. The role of corporatist intellectual-politicians was central in some of these regimes, and the Iberian authoritarian experiences of Primo de Rivera in Spain and Salazar's Portugal influenced many of them. Catholic intellectual-politicians gave voice to an impressive process that spread social and political corporatist ideas that, throughout Latin America, were mainly associated with Iberia, thereby avoiding association with Italian Fascism. When we examine the corpus of the new authoritarian right-wing nationalist constructs in Latin America, we see the influence of Action Française blended with the corresponding Iberian elite movements – Spanish Action (Acción Española) in Spain and Lusitanian Integralism (Integralismo Lusitano) in Portugal. Nevertheless, the Salazar model in Latin America comes basically from segments of the Catholic-oriented elites and movements.

In the chapter "The Andes Encounters the Iberian Dictatorships: Perceptions of Salazarism and Francoism in Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia (1930–1950)," Carlos Espinosa notes that the Iberian dictatorships of Franco and Salazar offered versions of authoritarianism that were more compatible with Catholicism and traditionalism. The regimes of Salazar and Franco were viewed as models of corporatism; however, Franco's regime proved more influential in Latin America as its discourse of Hispanism notions of a Hispanic *raza* (race) offered a vision of a transnational community and the basis for racialized national identities.

A similar, although more nuanced, portrait is painted by Gabriela Gomes in the chapter "Selective Appropriations of Iberian Dictatorships and the Radical Right in 1930s Argentina and Chile." Here, the circulation of authoritarian proposals – namely, those of Primo de Rivera and Franco in Spain and Salazar's in Portugal – were also the most attractive to a radical-right segment. In the context of the 1929 international crisis, radical-right-wing political groups and intellectual circles that criticized liberal democracy and

its party system advocated a new order based on organic democracy and a harmonious and hierarchical society that was essentially a blended version of these Iberian regimes.

Ironically and counterintuitively, a much more diverse portrait is given by the New State of Getúlio Vargas in Brazil. Here, the influence of Italian Fascism in the regime's institutional design is both more significant and much more eclectic. Vargas's New State (1937–1945) is the most important example of the institutionalization of corporatism in an authoritarian setting in Latin America. Social corporatism had an enduring legacy, and Vargas's dictatorship represented a much more powerful break with political liberalism than was the case with other contemporary regimes in Latin America. In the chapter 'Intellectual Debates about Catholic Corporatism in 1930s Brazil," Luciano Aronne de Abreu and Gabriel Duarte Costaguta analyze the range of discourses and influences on Brazilian corporatism. These go beyond Oliveira Viana and Azevedo Amaral's works or their possible Italian and Portuguese influences and include references to Mihail Manoilescu, the French Solidarists, Roosevelt's New Deal, and the papal encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*.

Notes

1 On social institutions, see Sandrine Kott and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Nazism across Borders. The Social Policies of the Third Reich and Their Global Appeal*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018.
2 See M. Pasetti, "The fascist labour charter and its transnational spread," in António Costa Pinto, ed., *Corporatism and Fascism*, London, Routledge, pp. 143–158.
3 Kurt Weyland, *Assault on Democracy: Communism, Fascism, and Authoritarianism during the Interwar Years*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2021.
4 See António Costa Pinto, *Latin America Dictatorships in the Era of Fascism*, London, Routledge, 2020.