

RULING THE LAW

The North–South global divide is as much about perception and prejudice as it is about economic disparities. Latin America is no less ruled by hegemonic misrepresentations of its national legal systems. The European image of its laws mostly upholds legal legitimacy and international comity. By contrast, diagnoses of excessive legal formalism, an extraordinary gap between law and action, inappropriate European transplants, elite control, pervasive inefficiencies, and massive corruption call for wholesale law reform. Misrepresented to the level of becoming fictions, these ideas nevertheless have profound influence on US foreign policy, international agency programs, private disputes, and academic research. Jorge Esquirol identifies their materialization in global governance – mostly undermining Latin American states in legal geopolitics – and their deployment by private parties in transnational litigation and international arbitration. Bringing unrelenting legal realism to comparative law, this study explores new questions in international relations, focusing on the power dynamics among national legal systems.

JORGE L. ESQUIROL is a founding faculty member of the College of Law at Florida International University and the school's first international programs director. He was previously academic affairs director at the Harvard Law School Graduate Program and then faculty member at Northeastern University School of Law. He is a graduate of the Harvard Law School J.D. and S.J.D. programs and Georgetown University undergraduate in finance. Professor Esquirol is the 2016 Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Law at the University of Trento in Italy. He has published various books and articles on law in Latin America, including publications in Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian.

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LEGITIMACY AND FAILURE
IN LATIN AMERICAN LEGAL SYSTEMS

JORGE L. ESQUIROL

Florida International University, College of Law



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For Jeff

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