

silence them. In other words, there is little reason to assume that Venezuela is a typical case of how the left is likely to behave.

In sum, I submit that the prospect of media pluralism in Latin America is still likely to be tied to the fortunes of a democratic left in the region (much as was the case in Sweden 75 years ago).

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Lee J. Alston, Marcus André Melo, Bernardo Mueller, and Carlos Pereira, *Brazil in Transition: Beliefs, Leadership, and Institutional Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. Illustrations, tables, abbreviations, bibliography, index, 280 pp.; hardcover \$39.50, ebook.

The arrival of this book may appear, at first blush, untimely. The authors' admittedly bold claim—that Brazil has undergone a critical transition that has placed the country on the path to sustainable development—sounds a dissonant chord in light of the troubling news emanating recently from Brazil: a contracting economy and a fiscal crisis, the mammoth scale of the Petrobras bribery scandal, the National Congress's removal of a president for misrepresenting public finances and the countercharge of a congressional coup d'état, a replacement administration loaded with figures tainted by corruption allegations, and polls suggesting declining public support for democratic institutions.

However, this book argues for an assessment of Brazil that goes beyond last year's growth rate or even this year's impeachment crisis. The authors' main argument is that Brazil's dominant actors have embraced a set of beliefs—economic orthodoxy, social inclusion, and political openness—that have laid the foundations for sustained but moderate economic growth rates, the growing force of the rule of law, and a more participatory politics. The analytical framework draws from the new institutional economics, specifically the variant that emphasizes the centrality of beliefs for institutional equilibrium. For the authors, an underlying consensus centered on “fiscally sound social inclusion” marks a positive and (perhaps) long-term institutional change in Brazil.

The book's argument encompasses three sections. Part 1 introduces the key concepts guiding the institutional analysis. The heart of the argument is the tension between the centripetal force of the beliefs shared by a country's dominant network of actors and centrifugal moments of crisis that upend expectations and create a "window of opportunity" for a new belief system to emerge. In part 2, the authors apply these concepts to the Brazilian case via a series of analytic narratives that cover the period spanning the military dictatorship to the presidency of Dilma Rousseff. Working inductively, the authors return to the conceptual framework in part 3, providing a more detailed presentation that emphasizes beliefs and leadership, as well as an application of the framework to the case of Argentina.

For the authors, the "window of opportunity" in Brazil occurred with the dissolution of the military regime's developmentalist agenda (chapter 3), which upended existing expectations among the country's dominant actors. In chapters 4 through 6, the authors argue that the new socially inclusive, fiscally orthodox paradigm took shape with the 1988 Constitution. The authors argue in chapter 4 that the constitution heralded this new consensus, evident both in the participatory manner in which it was crafted and in its cultivation of the rule of law (they highlight, for example, the importance of the independent public prosecutor's office, a constitutional innovation that institutionalized checks on executive and legislative authority).

Of course, the 1988 Constitution is the same document that was widely maligned for its fiscal expansiveness and institutional ambiguity. Chapter 5 credits Fernando Henrique Cardoso for advancing the emerging institutional consensus on two fronts. First, Cardoso definitively moved the country away from its illiberal fascination with import substitution, corporatism, and the inflation tax. For the authors, as important as the specific fiscal and monetary reforms that Cardoso implemented (the Real Plan, the Social Emergency Fund, trade liberalization, a new foreign exchange policy) was the way he used constitutionally prescribed methods for achieving these changes.

While Cardoso's methods borrowed heavily from the political playbook of the past—pork-barrel, patronage, decree powers—he did not use the inflationary crisis or his own popularity to elevate the authority of the executive branch at the expense of Congress or the judiciary. Instead, he patiently built coalitions in support of reform, including the laborious maintenance of the supermajorities needed for constitutional amendments.

Second, Cardoso is lauded for bolstering social inclusion by increasing per capita social spending, as evidenced in the *Bolsa Escola* (School Fund), the conditional cash transfer program that President Lula subsequently expanded on with the *Bolsa Família* (Family Fund). By the time the former metalworker was elected president in 2002, the authors contend, nothing short of a new social contract had emerged in Brazil. Far from upending fiscally sound social inclusion, the authors point out in chapter 6, President Lula chose pension and tax reforms as his first policy goals and produced budgetary surpluses, which suggests how much the consensus was shared across the ideological spectrum.

The presidency of Dilma Rousseff and her subsequent replacement with Michel Temer are more problematic for Brazil and for the authors' arguments (the book was published as the impeachment crisis began but before Dilma's ouster). In chapter 6, they acknowledge that Dilma's antiliberal economic policies, deficit spending, and disinclination to build congressional alliances were a marked departure from fiscally sound social inclusion. The concluding chapter and an afterword also acknowledge the severity of the economic and political crisis in Dilma's second term, which constitute a new "window of opportunity" that could, once again, upend prevailing expectations.

Given recent events, what are we to make of the book's argument that fiscally sound social inclusion constitutes a new Brazilian social contract? The initial signs from the Temer government are less than reassuring. The new president seems committed to restoring fiscal balance, and the judiciary appears undeterred in seeing through the Petrobras investigations. However, Congress's recent efforts to torpedo an anticorruption law, the tainted past of Temer and his current congressional allies, and the decidedly unrepresentative gender and racial composition of Temer's government suggest a stubborn reassertion of the politics of impunity and cronyism. For some readers, these events may suggest a failure by the authors to appreciate the epiphenomenal nature of the apparent consensus of the Cardoso-Lula years, which perhaps was simply the byproduct of the end of hyperinflation, rising commodity prices, and two presidents who were politically astute enough to take advantage of the good times.

For others, recent events, and the authors' cautious tone in the last section of the book, will speak to a reasonable acknowledgment of the contingent nature of political and economic outcomes. They will agree, as I do, that the institutional changes of the last 25 years that the authors highlight are profound, while sharing the authors' view that development is a "rough ride" in which inefficiencies, mistakes, and setbacks are the norm. Whichever way one receives the arguments in this book, they merit a serious reading: the strength of this volume is its holistic re-evaluation of recent Brazilian history in light of an analytic framework that constantly pushes the reader to look beyond the headlines to consider the latent, foundational understandings that animate a political system.

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Sean W. Burges, *Brazil in the World: The International Relations of a South American Giant*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017. Figures, tables, bibliography, index, 296 pp.; hardcover \$115, paperback \$32.95, ebook.

Sean Burges is a well-known specialist on Brazilian foreign policy with an original and often controversial analytical perspective. *Brazil in the World* contains reflections on his extensive research, some of which has been presented in journal articles. The book includes the existing literature on the topic, as well as official Brazilian sources of financial and trade data, speeches, and interviews with diplomats from the Brazilian Ministry of External Relations.