

effective in reducing poverty and infant mortality, saving mothers' lives, and increasing school attendance. Unsurprisingly, the conditional cash transfer program Bolsa Família plays an important role in reducing poverty, but the authors show that it also spills over into health and education. Still, no single policy or pathway is a silver bullet: policy councils help women run for office but do not help them have economic status, and Bolsa Família cannot help middle and high school students who may feel more pressure to contribute to household income.

As with any major scholarly contribution, aspects of the argument deserve further explanation, and there are questions left unanswered. Analyzing municipalities allows the authors to investigate within-country variation and localities ruled by different parties. However, the bulk of the book's empirical analysis covers the period during which the Workers' Party ruled the central government, and as the authors themselves acknowledge, the changes they observe were partly induced by federal coordination, incentives, and enforcement of legislation. Although by no means the sole actor responsible for participatory budgeting and the councils that are the driving force of non-electoral participation, the Workers' Party pushed for their creation. It expanded and consolidated the conditional cash transfer program that makes up a large part of the authors' measure of rights-based social policies and also led to the development of the index of decentralized management, an important measure of a usable state. Thus, would we have seen the conditions for these pathways work without Workers' Party rule? This question could use some further explanation because it speaks directly to the sustainability of progress as Brazil goes through radical political changes, including the current rise of right-wing federal and state legislators and a deep and resistant economic crisis.

Furthermore, one could challenge the claim that it is possible to neatly separate these causal pathways from other variables that lead to good governance and well-being. Many of those variables are admittedly difficult to measure, such as civic-mindedness and social capital, which operate differently in each locality, vary over time, and likely shape welfare outcomes in different ways. The authors present a set of correlations that are quite persuasive, and as a whole, they paint a consistent picture of how these pathways sum together and interact to produce well-being. But the process of creating these pathways is messy, and how communities are able to develop them probably influences whether they can effectively bring about change. For outside observers, it is intriguing to observe why Camaragibe was on a virtuous path, whereas even a reformist local leader in Jabotão Dos Guararapes failed to nudge it toward sustainable development.

Yet, these issues should not minimize the book's contribution. The authors' message that economic growth is

not enough for well-being is a necessary one. Although many focus on the role of fiscal booms in creating the conditions for expansion of welfare provision, this approach misses the reasons why money would trickle down into effective pro-poor policies. The authors point to the inner workings of policy implementation, helping readers interested in knowing which aspects of democracy work to create well-being. Even if some aspects of human development, such as quality of education, may take a longer time to take off, Wampler, Borges Sugiyama, and Touchton show us that a "thick" democracy can save the lives of mothers and children, empower women to run for elected office, and put children in schools and food on the table.

Royal Capitalism: Wealth, Class, and Monarchy in Thailand. By Puangchon Unchanam. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2020. 336p. \$79.95 cloth.
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Widely perceived as an anachronism since the nineteenth century, monarchy is a regime type that scholars of modern politics have paid scant attention to. This is not entirely surprising. Where they survive, such as in Scandinavia and Britain, monarchies often serve mainly ornamental functions, with sovereign power resting in fully democratic bodies. The persistence of politically powerful monarchies in some parts of the world is therefore something of a puzzle. Nowhere is that puzzle greater than in the country formerly known as Siam, the subject of Puangchon Unchanam's *Royal Capitalism: Wealth, Class, and Monarchy in Thailand*. Here the resilience of monarchy has gone hand in hand not with the extraction of resource rents, as is the case for many of the resilient monarchies in the Arab world, but rather with rapid industrialization, economic globalization, the emergence of a strong domestic bourgeoisie, and a fitful process of democratization. Such socioeconomic development, which accelerated dramatically in the 1960s, would be expected to lead to a decline in the political role of the monarchy. Yet the Thai monarchy has continued to exercise a degree of political power that vastly exceeds that associated with constitutional monarchies. Its continuing capacity to legitimate nondemocratic forms of government was most recently revealed following the 2006 and 2014 military coups, which toppled democratically elected governments led by Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister Yingluck Shinawatra, respectively.

Given that the Thai monarchy is protected by draconian lese majesty and national security laws, few scholars, Thai or non-Thai, have thought it worth the personal risk to subject the Thai monarchy to more intense scrutiny and critical analysis. Unchanam is therefore to be lauded for

writing the first book-length study of its kind to take stock of the entirety of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's reign from 1946 to 2016, as well as the subsequent succession to the throne by his son King Vajiralongkorn. Much of the considerable value of *Royal Capitalism* lies in its mobilization of a wide range of primary sources, from official yearbooks and banknotes to poetry and songs, to shed new light on the shifting position of the Thai monarchy as a political actor, economic concern, and cultural and ideological icon. In this respect *Royal Capitalism* constitutes an important contribution to the Thai radical tradition, following in the footsteps of scholars such as Chit Phumisak (assassinated in 1966), Somsak Jeamteerasakul (in exile since 2014), and Kasian Tejapira.

In framing *Royal Capitalism*, Unchanam draws on the classical political economists, including Adam Smith, Karl Marx, and Max Weber. He seeks to “challenge the conventional wisdom that monarchy must eventually give way to capitalism” by positing the Thai monarchy as an “emblematic embodiment” of a “novel form of monarchy” (p. 4). More specifically, the emergence of a “bourgeois monarchy” in Thailand is interpreted as evidence of a more general “underestimation of the ability of a monarchy to adapt itself to capitalism” and a corresponding “overestimation of the power of the bourgeoisie” as a “progressive and revolutionary” class (p. 6).

These are difficult arguments to bring home in the context of a single-country study. The Thai monarchy may of course yet prove the conventional wisdom correct. It is not clear that the concept of bourgeois monarchy, as developed in the Thai context, travels beyond the kingdom's borders. And it is not clear who, today, fails to recognize the highly contingent nature of capitalist and middle-class support for political causes of whatever kind.

As the subtitle of the book also suggests, it is primarily positioned as a contribution to Marxist thought. In pursuit of this theoretical agenda, Unchanam complements the Marxist conceptual toolbox by elaborating on Ernst Kantorowicz's notion that the king has “two bodies” (*The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, 1957). To the corporeal monarch and the monarchy as political institution, Unchanam adds a third body: the capitalist body of the Thai monarchy. This is constituted through direct and indirect monarchical control over the largest business conglomerate not only in Thailand but also in Southeast Asia (p. 18). The bulk of this wealth is held by the Crown Property Bureau (CPB) over which the monarchy, since the late 1940s, has exercised discretionary power with minimal public oversight. The Thai monarchy is, by some estimates, the world's wealthiest.

Royal Capitalism consists of five substantive chapters, plus an introduction. Drawing on the secondary literature, chapter 1 describes how the Siamese monarchy managed the dual transition from a “feudal” to a capitalist mode of production and from a premodern polity to a modern

nation-state. This involved both an attempt at the “bourgeoisification” of the monarchy, with the predecessor of the CPB, the Privy Purse Bureau, acting as a capitalist entrepreneur pioneering investment in banking, manufacturing, and real estate development (p. 43), and the creation of a centralized state bureaucracy. Although these reforms were remarkably successful, the consequences proved disastrous for the absolute monarchy, which was toppled in 1932 by a group of civilian bureaucrats and military officers. At this juncture, Unchanam notes, it seemed as if the Thai monarchy would conform to the expectations of classical political economists by being reduced to, at best, a symbolic “remnant of the feudal past that would not play a dominant role in the political and economic realms of the bourgeois state” (p. 63).

The subsequent two chapters describe and analyze the Thai monarchy's remarkable rise from this nadir. Chapter 2 focuses on the revival of the monarchy beginning in the late 1950s. Although this was instigated and aided by military regimes allied with the United States, King Bhumibol in due course proved able to transcend that subordinate role, emerging as an autonomous and eventually hegemonic actor in domestic politics—not beholden to foreign sponsors and enjoying extraordinary power, prestige, prosperity, and popularity across all segments of society, from rural peasants to the Sino-Thai middle class. Chapter 3 makes the point that the monarchy's comeback in no small part was due to skillful image management that responded to new social circumstances and evolving cultural expectations. Over time, Bhumibol was presented to the Thai public less as a Hindu god-king, Buddhist righteous ruler, or anticommunist warrior-king and “more as a beloved and ordinary father figure who embraced the bourgeois ethic of hard work, frugality, prudence, and self-reliance” (p. 107).

The book's final two chapters detail what can only be described as the decline of the Thai monarchy. Chapter 4 notes how the past 15 years have been characterized by political turmoil, strife, and harsh military repression—and serious alienation from the monarchy by sections of the population. The considerable limitations to Thailand's bourgeois monarchy as a provider of political order have thus been exposed. In Unchanam's Marxist vocabulary, this is a question of its “intrinsic contradictions” (p. 215). As chapter 5 makes clear, the new king has responded to the looming threats to the hegemonic position of the Thai monarchy by exercising power in a much less subtle way than his father ever did, centralizing political, economic, and coercive power into his own hands to a degree unseen since the days of the absolute monarchy. The chapter, and the book, concludes by arguing that the Thai case provides “lessons for rethinking the other monarchies of the world, their relationships with social classes, and their prospects in the age of global capitalism” (p. 233) and also in relation to the increasingly monarchical style of politics that has emerged in republics such as the United States, Russia,

Turkey, and China (pp. 235–36). Here the arguments become exceedingly vague, and the concept of monarchy is stretched such that it loses analytical value.

Conditionality and Coercion: Electoral Clientelism in Eastern Europe. By Isabela Mares and Lauren E. Young. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. 352p. \$90.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592720002789

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The central question of Isabela Mares and Lauren E. Young's probing and meticulously researched book is, How does electoral clientelism work? Tackling it entails a host of related questions. What are the different forms that clientelism can take? What governs politicians' choice among these different forms? How do voters respond—both those voters directly targeted by clientelism as recipients and those indirectly targeted as onlookers?

Mares and Young begin by carefully conceptualizing what clientelism is and is not. They first distinguish clientelism from patronage: the former is targeted at voters, whereas the latter is targeted at party activists (p. 48). Most earlier studies of party competition and party building in postcommunist Europe focused on patronage and analyzed the first decade of democratization. Mares and Young's study, which focuses on Hungary and Romania during the 2010s, is a useful update to this research: first, because clientelism is arguably even more difficult to measure than patronage, and second, because the massive upheaval of state administrations during the first decade of postcommunism offered parties opportunities to access state resources that are unlikely to occur again soon. Should we, then, expect party competition to become more grounded in programmatic appeals to voters as these other avenues close off? Not necessarily, according to Mares and Young: clientelism does not require much in the way of state resources, because denying (or threatening to deny) voters' access to such resources can be as effective as granting access to them.

The authors' close attention to conceptualizing clientelism facilitates the formulation of precise and empirically testable hypotheses that break down the complex calculations of both politicians and voters governing its use. They disaggregate clientelism into four types: policy favors, policy coercion, economic coercion, and vote buying. Policy favors and policy coercion rely on politicians' access to state resources to reward or punish voters. In Hungary and Romania, these resources tend to be workfare programs and other antipoverty policies. Herein is one particularly disagreeable feature of such clientelism: it pits poor voters against other poor voters. Economic coercion—in which politicians collaborate with such local brokers as money lenders—does not involve state resources, but it is equally venal. A politician's choice to use clientelism,

and in what form, is not as simple as incentivizing the votes of those directly affected by favors or coercion. The book's major theoretical insight is to consider how clientelism may serve as a form of information about the broader policy positions of the politicians using it.

Consider the following scenario involving a village with high unemployment, a significant population of economically marginalized ethnic Roma who depend on state services, and another sizable group of retirees living on state pensions—in short, the typical site of “poor against poor” politics in provincial Hungary and Romania. The local mayor is known to withhold state benefits from Roma voters unless they vote for him. Even if most voters dislike clientelism in principle, some may be willing to overlook this flaw and vote for the mayor anyway because they dislike social spending, especially on Roma. In short, clientelism sends a programmatic message to the mayor's voter base that he is tough on welfare. (Let's not forget, of course, the votes of the Roma threatened with the loss of benefits.) There are multiple factors at play in this scenario, two of which are the degree of control the mayor has over state resources in the first place (the “supply” of clientelism) and the relative size of constituencies supporting or opposing welfare policies (the “demand” side). Sorting out these dynamics is the book's central theoretical contribution. It also structures the authors' formidable empirical research.

Not only do the authors put together the most comprehensive and fine-grained data collection effort that I have seen on this topic but they also analyze it using methods both qualitative and quantitative. The research sites are small towns in Romania and Hungary in the 2010s in which sizable chunks of the electorate depend on state benefits, on the one hand, and loan sharking by local economic kingpins, on the other. Each empirical chapter covers one of the four types of electoral clientelism and follows a similar structure. First, each presents the results of extensive ethnographic interviewing by a team of locally based researchers. These interviews describe the “how?” of electoral clientelism: we read stories of welfare entitlements illegally withheld and all sorts of pressure applied. Then, each chapter switches from the qualitative to quantitative mode, employing a range of sophisticated survey-based experiments to measure the incidence of clientelism across research sites; testing how voters update their evaluations of politicians who use clientelism depending on such factors as economic ideology; and gauging the extent to which the use of clientelist strategies depends on the degree of political control that a local mayor has.

There is a wealth of fascinating findings too numerous to detail here. One important and reassuring finding from the surveys is that voters do *not* like clientelism. Of course, although clientelism is costly as such, these costs may be offset by the signals it sends about politicians' programmatic positions regarding social spending and other policy