

even if it does not fully achieve, a better understanding of the nature of the Mexican state in the decades after the Cárdenas administration.

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Participatory Budgeting in Brazil: Contestation, Cooperation, and Accountability. By Brian Wampler. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2007. Pp xvi, 312. Tables. Appendix. Bibliography. \$55.00 cloth.

At the time of this writing there are probably over a thousand cities and towns across the world experimenting with some version of participatory budgeting (PB). A Brazilian invention dating to the early 1990s, it is at its core a blueprint for citizen involvement in decision-making about municipal budgets. This basic idea has also captured the imagination of researchers who have by now written a great deal about the advantages of implementing this system. Brian Wampler's excellent new book moves this vast debate forward by taking the discussion in a comparative direction, examining eight cities in Brazil that experimented with this system in the 1990s and 2000s. The book's main conclusion—that contextual factors matter in the eventual success of participation—is an unpretentious one, but it is also an important one, anchored as it is in carefully documented evidence and detail. It is also a conclusion to which policy makers should attend in their enthusiastic implementation of best practices.

The book develops an analytical framework before offering some background on participatory budgeting and discussing the eight cities in pairs, from the most successful ones (such as Porto Alegre) to the least successful (such as Blumenau). The variation in outcomes is determined by the interaction of two contextual factors: the capacity and willingness of civil society to be contentious and mayoral support for delegating authority to citizens. In cases where both are “high”—a potentially contentious civil society connected to a highly willing municipal executive—the outcome is, as in Porto Alegre, the most successful, creating accountability as well as participation. An uncontentious or unable civil society paired with an unwilling local executive, on the other hand, produces cynicism and a weakened civil society in turn. A partially willing executive will produce different results depending on civil society's contentiousness. With contention, such as in Recife, there will be partial participatory democracy; without it, there is co-optation (Santo André).

The book draws on a range of empirical materials. One of its methodological advances is the comparison across cities. This is a book about eight cities with a similar participatory blueprint, where it has worked for at least seven years, with vastly different outcomes. The other methodological innovation comes from the use participant surveys, which Wampler uses to dual effect: on one hand, as a pooled data source to consider PB as an institution, and on the other to discuss specific cases. So, for example, Wampler is able to test the imputed democratic effects of participatory budgeting using a broad sample of cities (as well as contextual controls), while also being able to empirically demonstrate the value of

his categories. According to the introduction, this is a book many years in the making, and the range of empirical materials is a testament not only to the length of the research but its quality as well.

Overall, this exceptional book moves the debate forward, and should also provoke discussion. The questions it answers, of course, raise new ones. Its insistence on context inspires thinking about cities and towns outside of the comparison of the study. The analysis is based on a sample of cities where PB had been working for at least seven years. First, these are not the places where things had gone disastrously wrong. But these are also places that on the whole started PB earlier, which means the sample is composed of generally larger cities, with a strong representation of southern and southeastern cities. Another question it raises is about the ultimate meaning of these experiences. One of the great strengths of the book is the way it carefully assesses claims and takes measured stock of results, perhaps in reaction to the perceived celebratory tone of earlier works. As a result, Wampler resists making more grandiose claims. The question the book inspires, and to which the debate may still turn, is this: what is the real significance for citizenship, for democracy, and for places outside of Brazil of these local experiments in participatory budgeting?

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CULTURAL & LITERARY STUDIES

El Lector: A History of the Cigar Factory Reader. By Araceli Tinajero. Translated by Judith E. Grasberg. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010. Pp. xviii, 268. Illustrations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$50.00 cloth.

English-speaking readers will welcome this translation of the acclaimed *El lector de tabaquería: Historia de una tradición cubana* (2007), which won an honorable mention in the 2006 Casa de las Américas competition. Professor Tinajero takes us on a 140-year journey to Cuba, Spain, the United States, Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic as she traces the influence and vicissitudes of the Cuban practice of reading aloud in cigar factories, a custom which began in prison workshops. The practice was received with ambivalence in some places, and even banned occasionally in nineteenth-century Cuba and Mexico. Overall, however, the benefit of having a quiet, focused workforce outweighed the risk of having the workers overly excited or even too politicized by readers turned agitators. Accounts of fistfights over the choice of novels or over political differences emerge in this book, along with descriptions of rituals, such as the Mexican workers' celebration of the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and memories of pensioners who had been readers or workers.

This is a thrilling read with beautiful pacing, as the author moves fluidly between the overview and the case study, or between accounts of newspapers published for cigar factory workers and lists of books selected by various readers. There are sections devoted to