The couple met in secret at first, and later with less discretion. After the fall of Madero's government, Arizmendi moved back to San Antonio, and the Vasconcelos family installed themselves nearby. The lovers travelled together to Washington and New York as Vasconcelos worked to support opposition first to Huerta and later to Carranza. Finally, when their funds ran out, Vasconcelos accepted a post in Lima as a school administrator. There Vasconcelos became increasingly obsessed with irrational jealousies, which eventually led Arizmendi to flee back to New York. She broke off her relationship with him, citing his marriage as the principal reason. Vasconcelos' own friends sympathised with Arizmendi as his behaviour worsened. He seemed unable to accept her rejection; he threatened her, slandered her, and made her so fearful of returning home to Mexico that she decided to remain in New York, where she married a US citizen, Robert Deutsch. The couple were ill suited, however, with little in common, and they soon separated.

Alone in New York, Arizmendi became active in the international women's movement. She attended the Pan-American Congress of Women in Baltimore in 1922 and edited the periodical *Feminismo Internacional*. She found herself, due to her biculturalism, lodged between ideological currents. She was a proponent of international feminism, yet she was knowledgeable about and critical of North American racism at a time when few of her colleagues had raised the issue. She perceived a distinction between North American and Hispanic American feminisms, and did not want to see North American imperialism extend into the realm of international feminism. To this end, she created the Liga de Mujeres de la Raza, which offered an alternative to organisations dominated by the North Americans. On the other hand, she also defended the United States against what she perceived as unwarranted critiques. Like Vasconcelos, she was an Arielista, yet she also disparaged what she called 'idiotic' Arielista 'hatred' of the United States. She felt that pan-Hispanic unity did not need to be based on an irrational dislike of everything associated with the United States, whose culture, she believed, contained many admirable elements.

Late in life, no longer fearful of Vasconcelos' ability to harm her or her family, Arizmendi returned to Mexico. She lived her final years in relative obscurity in the company of her favourite sister, Dolores. When she died, she was buried without fanfare. Sadly, it was Vasconcelos' fictitious Adriana who lived on. Gabriela Cano's thoughtful and well-researched reinterpretation is a welcome corrective.

Carthage College STEPHANIE MITCHELL

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Michelle L. Dion, *Workers and Welfare: Comparative Institutional Change in Twentieth-Century Mexico* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), pp. xv + 310, $27.95, pb.

This book examines the making of social welfare policy in Mexico from the 1920s until 2007. Michelle L. Dion argues that both a 'class coalition' approach, highlighting the importance of organised labour as a driving force in welfare policy innovation, and 'historical institutionalist' explanations, emphasising state administrative capacity, bureaucratic initiative and policy legacies, are relevant to explaining the origins and evolution of social welfare programmes in Mexico. In addition to an extensive review of the comparative literature on welfare regimes and secondary sources on social policy in Mexico, her analysis draws on archival materials including

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petitions to the federal executive seeking expanded welfare coverage, the policy proposals developed by groups like the Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos (Confederation of Mexican Workers, CTM) – the PRI's official labour group and, during most of the period examined in this book, Mexico's most politically influential labour organisation – and selected interviews with key policymakers.

The author's main contribution is her comprehensive account of social welfare development in Mexico across nearly nine decades. She focuses particularly on the creation of the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (Mexican Social Security Institute, IMSS, 1943) and the Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (Social Security and Services Institute for State Workers, ISSSTE, 1960), and the expansion of various social assistance policies from the late 1980s onwards. Although Dion tracks innovations in the IMSS and ISSSTE programmes over time, she includes only summary statistical data on the extent of their coverage (p. 113). Her data on the growth of poverty alleviation programmes since the late 1990s are much more complete.

One of Dion's goals is to assess the relative utility of 'class coalition' and 'historical institutionalist' approaches in the context of welfare policymaking in Mexico. Yet even though she often works with primary materials, her analysis is not always sufficiently fine-grained to draw convincing conclusions in this regard. Dion too frequently offers 'the balance of class power within the dominant coalition', or equivalent phrasings, as a generic explanation for particular policy outcomes (see, for example, pp. 63, 85, 114, 117), when what is required is a more specific tallying of winners and losers within Mexico's post-revolutionary authoritarian regime. For instance, although she recognises that the CTM quickly gained control over labour representation in the IMSS's governing council, that this arrangement produced resentment among rival labour groups, and that the labour movement during the 1940s was deeply divided, Dion does not note that the CTM's privileged position vis-à-vis the IMSS was one of the state subsidies that eventually permitted it to consolidate its dominance within the labour movement.

Similarly, 'the general shift in the relative political power and capacity of business and labor within the cross-class coalition supporting the PRI regime that occurred in the late 1980s and 1990s' (p. 133) does not explain why organised labour was virtually excluded from early planning for social insurance reform in the mid-1990s but then succeeded in substantially modifying the legislative proposal once it was submitted to Congress. Nor does this approach adequately demonstrate, for reasons suggested by Dion's own discussion of different labour organisations' bargaining positions and calculations of self-interest, how labour could successfully block the privatisation of public-sector pension funds and IMSS health care services in 1995, but not the introduction of defined contribution individual retirement accounts for private-sector workers.

In her discussion of social welfare policy before the 1990s Dion frequently privileges the 'demand' side of policy formation, detailing, for example, the multiple petitions that groups like the CTM registered for expanded public welfare programmes, without adequately considering other factors that might account for actual policy outcomes. She thereby tilts the analysis toward 'class coalition' explanations. Where available research materials permit a closer examination of policymaking processes – in the case of the IMSS's decision to expand social insurance to rural wage earners, for example – her findings are decidedly more ambiguous (p. 102).

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Dion embraces an outmoded concept of 'labour incorporation' framed in terms of the enactment of specific labour and social welfare legislation, and she adopts the party-centric, and now discredited, view that organised labour's links to the PRI, rather than a restrictive labour law regime, constituted the principal basis for the political subordination of labour from the 1950s onwards. The most problematic part of the book, though, is the author's regression analysis of the expansion of social insurance coverage over time.

Dion concludes that during the period between 1946 and 1981 the labour movement successfully used strike petitions in industries under federal jurisdiction as a form of political pressure to win expanded welfare benefits. There is, however, no indication in the known record of state–labour bargaining in Mexico that labour organisations ever employed mass strike petitions to lobby government officials over social insurance issues, and Dion offers no documentary evidence or interview testimony to support her supposition in this regard. It is, of course, possible that the IMSS and ISSSTE expanded their coverage during periods of economic difficulty, and that, as previous research has shown, during these periods unions also filed larger numbers of strike petitions in support of wage claims and related demands as the rate of inflation rose. Yet if the volume of strike petitions is only a general indicator of labour discontent, then the conclusion that 'strike petitions precede and cause increases in social insurance coverage' (p. 158) must be significantly qualified.

The book also contains other errors of fact and interpretation, including the dates of the 1916–17 Constitutional Convention and the creation of the Labour Congress (1966), the sources of funding for the Programa Nacional de Solidaridad (National Solidarity Programme, PRONASOL), and the causes of heightened strike activity in 1943 and 1944. It is, moreover, difficult to accept Dion's conclusion that 'the Salinas administration was able to place the burden of financing the SAR [Retirement Savings System] reform on business because … employer organizations had no formal ties to the ruling party, and they did not hold any elected positions in Congress' (p. 123).

These problems were identified during the manuscript review process conducted by another prospective publisher (not the University of Pittsburgh Press), and communicated to the author. It is unfortunate that they were not corrected prior to publication.

Institute of the Study of the Americas, University of London KEVIN J. MIDDLEBROOK

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Jonathan Di John, *From Windfall to Curse? Oil and Industrialization in Venezuela, 1920 to the Present* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), pp. xvii + 341, $65.00, hb.

For the last half-century, scholars, politicians and Venezuelans in general have commonly applied the concept of the 'resource curse' to Venezuela in order to explain why the nation, with such extraordinary oil income derived from the output of a small workforce, has performed somewhat disappointingly on the economic front. The resource curse thesis attributes Venezuela's alleged productive sluggishness to the historically tight control that the state has exercised over the oil sector and the resultant tendency towards excessive state intervention in the economy. This centralism stifles individual initiative and is conducive to widespread corruption.

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