

in extracting from a seemingly heterogeneous collection of experiences a set of policy-oriented lessons that may travel well inside the region. Thanks to these virtues, the book is an interesting point of departure for much-needed attempts to explain why and how the state and the private sector in Latin America are evolving the way they do.

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Tracy Beck Fenwick, *Avoiding Governors: Federalism, Democracy, and Poverty Alleviation in Brazil and Argentina*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2016. Tables, figures, acronyms, bibliography, index, 277 pp.; hardcover \$75, paperback \$29.

Tracy Beck Fenwick's book offers a two-country descriptive and comparative assessment of the implementation of central government–promoted conditional cash transfer programs (CCTs) in Brazil and Argentina. CCTs fall within the social policy area of noncontributory social protection and are characterized by delivering small amounts of cash contingent on households' fulfilling certain conditions. CCTs are expected to reduce intergenerational transmission of poverty through human capital investment (e.g., health, education, and nutrition). Fenwick suggests fiscal, political, and structural explanations for understanding variations in the success of CCT implementation in two neighboring federal countries, Brazil and Argentina.

This 277-page book has 7 chapters, 2 dedicated to describing and analyzing the origins and implementation of CCTs in Brazil and 2 that do the same for Argentina. The book makes a valuable contribution for scholars and practitioners working in the fields of federalism, government performance, policy implementation, and intergovernmental relations and cooperation. The 7 chapters follow a coherent, chronological sequence while employing a variety of evidence derived from semi-structured interviews with public officials (bureaucrats and elected officials) at all levels of government. The author also relies on primary documents of government data, national statistics, and media sources.

Although chapter 2 does a good job of describing the origins and drivers (external and domestic) of CCTs in Latin America, Fenwick's book focuses on implementing rather than adopting CCTs. Specifically, the author posits three research questions: why were CCTs nationalized from the subnational levels, and what were the intended political effects of nationalized poverty alleviation programs? What explains the extensive territorial distributions of Bolsa Família in Brazil, in contrast to Argentina's parallel underperformance of Programa Familias? How does each program's performance impact its stability and future policy development?

To answer these research questions, Fenwick's central hypothesis challenges the idea of strong federalism by undermining the role of governors. This explains the author's choice of the book's title. Fenwick contends that municipalities can facilitate the national government's ability to carry out a policy goal if governors' power is undermined, which is achieved through strengthening municipal fiscal and political autonomy. To identify this power asymmetry, the author warns readers about referring to subnational governments in an aggregated way, because provinces and municipalities need to be treated independently.

To understand why municipal strengthening contributes to successfully implementing national policy objectives, Fenwick advances three explanations. The structural explanation refers to the constitutional recognition of municipal autonomy. The fiscal or institutional explanation points to adopting hard budgetary restrictions for all levels of government. And the political explanation focuses on the existence of a consensual instead of majoritarian democracy, as defined by Lijphart (1984).

The author tests these three propositions through a two-case descriptive analysis and then a comparative examination. The author measures the success of the program's performance with absolute and territorial program distribution from 2003 to 2006, and the empirical analysis is based on descriptive statistics and simple odds ratios. Fenwick's analysis shows that Brazilian municipalities succeeded in promoting Bolsa Família, a national policy objective designated to alleviate poverty, because central government avoided governors. This avoidance was possible because Brazilian municipal autonomy is recognized by the 1989 Constitution; the Fiscal Responsibility Law, issued in 2000, adopted hard budget restrictions, leaving no room for governors to offer municipal bailouts; and the existence of a multiparty system encourages the executive to include other parties, thereby generating a consensual rather than majoritarian democracy.

On the other hand, Argentine municipalities failed in extending Programa Familias, a nationally promoted CCT, because governors used it as a tool to reward political supporters. The provincial capture of Programa Familias took place because the Argentine Constitution leaves to the provinces' discretion the question of municipal autonomy. Municipal fiscal regulations are based on soft budgetary regulations, allowing governors to rescue municipalities facing financial crisis. Furthermore, the two-party system has resulted in a majoritarian democracy, which discourages executives from promoting interparty cooperation. In sum, strong federalism in Argentina impedes national government capacity in social policy domains.

As a scholar of local government, I found this book insightful and instructive for several reasons. Fenwick provides a detailed description of the origins and trajectory of CCTs in Brazil and Argentina. The theoretical contribution, which highlights the role of municipal autonomy, seems appealing and convincing. The topic is very relevant because a program's performance determines its continuity, modification, or termination, which has huge implications for human development. This is undoubtedly a well-researched and well-structured book that contributes to our understanding of the workings of CCTs in federal countries in Latin America.

Despite this achievement, and even though the author offers good counterarguments for other potential explanations (such as ideology, a nation's concern with poverty, external and macroeconomic challenges, and the origins of CCTs in Brazil), this work may lead readers to a number of open questions. How does the implementation of CCTs take place at the municipal level? How do municipalities enforce households' compliance with conditions? How are municipalities held accountable in implementing the program? Does local legislatures' support affect program implementation? What about assessing other dimensions of program performance, such as quality, outcomes, responsiveness, accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness? While territorial distribution of a program is important, it can tell us little about the quality of services and the effectiveness of the service in alleviating poverty.

I also wish Fenwick had dedicated more attention to the role of program design in explaining program implementation. Some works explain program implementation as a function of policy design (Mumper 2003; Nicholson-Crotty 2007). In the case of Brazil, lessons derived from previous experience with CCTs since 1995 led central government to make structural changes. They included creating the Ministry of Social Development (MDS), reducing the bureaucratic chaos by integrating the program into a single federal ministry; consolidating a decentralized system of registration, Cadastro Único, which is available to municipalities; and adjusting the program to the Brazilian political and institutional configuration.

On the contrary in the Argentine case, two programs with similar objectives but targeting different beneficiaries were in place, *Programa Familias* and *Jefes y Jefas de Hogares Desocupados* (PJJHD). In addition, in the case of Brazil, the program included fiscal incentives, such as matching grants and extra revenues conditioned to performance, to encourage municipal involvement. These incentives were created to compensate small localities that complained about not having enough administrative standards to carry out the program.

This discussion leads me to other questions related to program design. Does the program include legal structures to ensure compliance by both implementers and target groups, as suggested by Sabatier (1986)? What are the number of veto points involved in the program delivery? Does the program design include sanctions and incentives to overcome resistance? Are there supporting programs? Moreover, I also would have liked to see more discussion of the moderated (or direct) effects that electoral rules (e.g., electoral cycle, concurrent elections), nature of the program (education, health, unemployment, nutrition, infrastructure, etc.), mayoral leadership, municipal capacity, and electoral competitiveness may have on program performance.

These questions and personal preferences should by no means detract from the valuable contributions Fenwick offers to the academic and practitioner communities concerned with federalism, intergovernmental relations, government performance, and the success of CCTs. In this book, Fenwick achieves her goals. One is to assess, through a two-country descriptive and comparative approach, the implementation of CCTs in federal Latin American democracies. The second is to suggest that the successful implementation of decentralized poverty alleviation programs depends on the strength of municipalities and their ability to exercise this strength autonomously from governors. The third is to propose that the presence of structural, political, and fiscal conditions permits national governments to avoid the intrusion of powerful governors.

Future study of how decentralized CCTs and other human development programs are implemented also should consider the additive and multiplicative role of program design, nature of the program, municipal capacity, mayoral competence, party system, and electoral rules. Future studies also should assess the success of CCTs across other dimensions of performance, such as outcomes, quality, equity, effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability.

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Michael Reid, *Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016 [2014]. Illustrations, 352 pp.; paperback \$22.

In 2014 Brazil organized the soccer World Cup. In 2016, the country again received millions of tourists from all over the world for the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Over the past years, several scholars and correspondents have written short, introductory, nonacademic books on Brazil. Riordan Roett's *New Brazil* (2011) offers a very broad overview but feels like a lengthy Wikipedia entry without much interpretation. Larry Rohter's *Brazil on the Rise* is more engaging, but it does not include Brazil's recent troubles, having been published in 2012. Michael Reid's *Brazil: The Troubled Rise of a Global Power* is perhaps the best choice, providing a lively, well-researched, and balanced picture of Brazil. (The list of academic books focusing on specific aspects, such as history or politics, is far wider, including Robert Levine's *Brazil Reader*, 1999; Boris Fausto's *Concise History of Brazil*, 2nd edition,