

relationship of the “authorities” of this local system with the rulers of the central Congolese state and (occasionally) with foreign invaders. This description is nuanced because this relationship is so complicated; the local “authorities” essentially negotiate a form of local sovereign rights for themselves and local traders that acknowledges central state authority, but never entirely submits to it. When necessary, they resist and sometimes successfully defy that central authority. For their part, Congo’s rulers in Kinshasa realize both that they lack sufficient control over their own representatives to extend real sovereignty in the region, but also that they can benefit from a favorable arrangement with these local authorities. It is easier to understand Raeymaekers’ argument by reference to some of the views that he argues *against*. He distinguishes his point of view from all of the following: the notion that local traders and security enforcers are acting *in the absence* of any central state presence at all; the idea that they are acting consistently *in opposition* to the central state, rather than in negotiation with it; and the proposition that rampaging local warlords are exploiting local inhabitants in an environment of chaos, unmediated by recognized rules of politico-economic conduct. Aside from the inherent complexity of his argument, Raeymaekers’ use of some vague post-structuralist language and his deployment of many avant-garde terms from social geography will obscure his argument for some political scientists. From the interdisciplinary perspective of this reviewer, however, it is well worth the effort of struggling with this language to benefit from the vivid and nuanced portrait that Raeymaekers paints of Nande culture and the unusual political economy that it has produced.

Following his introduction laying out the argument, Raeymaekers turns to a description of the contemporary political economy in the Congolese town of Kasindi. The major economic activity is commercial trade across the Lubiriha River, which marks the Congolese-Ugandan border. The “constriction” of the trading space represented by the border creates economic opportunities for both the Nande traders and officials on both sides of the border. Congolese agriculturalists produce foodstuffs and charcoal to be traded for processed foodstuffs and light manufactures coming from Uganda. The Nande “capitalists” controlling this trade benefit handsomely, though unpredictably, while state authorities on both sides of the border extort a portion of the profits for private benefit. Those who do the yeoman’s work of the trade are displaced and dispossessed of their land, barely surviving under the harsh system.

Chapter 2 traces the historical origins of the Nande entrepreneurial culture that animates this contemporary trade. Raeymaekers finds the origins of Nande “capitalist” culture first in the encounter with American Protestant (Baptist) missions, who preached self-reliance and hard work, along with Christian gospel. Second, the headquartering of a Belgian mining operation at Butembo in

1923 created a cash economy in which Nande economic culture could gain traction. The demarcation of the colonial border between Congo and Uganda, and later the advance of the first Congolese civil war (1960–1964) into North Kivu, further defined Nande trading culture as one that could negotiate virtual state absence, a violent political environment, and the economic opportunities of a nearby international frontier. Chapter 3 continues the story of evolving Nande entrepreneurial culture through the period of rule by Mobutu Sese Seko, during which time the Zairian state engaged in periodic predation, but little regulation. In this environment, local Nande businessmen consolidated their role as local “political regulators” as they extended their capitalist activities into light manufacturing and extra-continent trade with Asia. The subsequent chapter describes how Nande businessmen “re-produced” political order after the fall of Mobutu and through the official period of war in Congo (1997–2003). Although the Zairian state collapsed, Nande business elites nimbly maintained the politico-economic order of North Kivu to their relative economic advantage during this era of putative chaos. The fifth chapter describes how the Nande politico-economic elite responded to the nominal restoration of legitimate rule in Congo between 2003 and 2013. In this period, they had to reckon with the reappearance of both international (United Nations) and Congolese state authorities on the scene, and cede some political control in the renegotiation of power; on the other hand, internal Congolese markets to the west were opened to them, while their international operations gained a new legitimacy. Always, their entrepreneurial culture was flexible enough to adapt to the opportunities of “liminality” as the power of external authority waxed stronger again.

In sum, Raeymaekers provides a powerful corrective to the pervasive view that the economy of Eastern Congo has been controlled by “blunt adventurers and warlords acting for pure selfish gain” (p. 142). He convincingly shows that Nande entrepreneurs have created and sustained a local political order in North Kivu beginning with the decay of Belgian colonialism, and continuing through subsequent periods of state predation, state collapse, war and invasion, and the return of “legitimate” authority. His study also shows how invaluable an ethnography of a key people’s political economy can be to our understanding of politics in weak and collapsed African states.

**Private Wealth and Public Revenue in Latin America: Business Power and Tax Politics.** By Tasha Fairfield. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 364p. \$99.00 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592716000499

— Hillel David Soifer, *Temple University*

Latin America’s economies are strikingly under-taxed. Its governments, influenced by neoliberal economic policies

to pursue competitiveness, have extracted little from their economies and rely on regressive taxes rather than taxing private wealth. Tasha Fairfield's book not only brings Latin American cases—among the most unequal in the world—into the conversation about the democratic politics of wealth, it is also the single best study to date of the causal channels through which Latin American economic elites shape tax policy and thus how democratic governance is distorted by the influence of the wealthy.

Fairfield investigates how business power prevents tax reform, exploring variation across countries, sectors, and time in Latin America. Two distinct types of power are at work: the structural power that results from fear of adverse response to policy by economic actors, and the instrumental power that gives business the “capacity for deliberate political actions” (p. 28). The book shows that each, operating at various stages of the tax reform process, is sufficient to undermine the imposition of increased taxes on business. Based on more than 400 interviews in three countries (Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile) as well as the analysis of many other source materials, the book explores some three dozen reform proposals (drawn from a population of 60 assembled by the author in the course of her research) and traces how these two forms of business power shaped policy outcomes. The book also examines strategies politicians can use to circumvent this business power and tax it more heavily, and how the role of popular mobilization can overwhelm that power in exceptional moments.

Though its empirical contributions are significant and compelling, this book is especially notable for two of its methodological strengths. One of these is the conceptualization and measurement of business power and its sources, which takes place most centrally in Chapter Two. Here Fairfield elaborates clear definitions of both structural and instrumental power, explicit ways to measure each, and a precisely delineated set of explanations for why business power varies. This chapter is a marvel of clarity and precision, and should serve as a model not only for future work in this field, but also for the design of research more generally.

The other great methodological strength of this book, manifested in its empirical chapters, is its implementation of process tracing. Alongside Alan Jacobs' (2011) *Governing for the Long Term*, this book provides the single best example of process tracing this reader has ever encountered. The evidence from hundreds of interviews is not only marshaled effectively to assess the causal claims the author advances and alternative explanations, but is also well integrated into the text and reference material. Most important is the transparent way in which the inferences from those interviews are presented. At a moment when the discipline of political science is torn about standards for research transparency in published work, Fairfield's book (and the associated articles she has published in various venues) provides a model for scholars who seek to

explicitly show how the evidence used to evaluate causal claims is generated and how it is interpreted in the course of their analysis.

As a model of process tracing, the book also brings into relief some of the tradeoffs inherent in this approach to causal assessment. First, its achronic presentation may not serve those seeking a more historical presentation of the history of Latin America's tax reform initiatives. Yet this organization has a signal advantage in that it highlights the evaluation of causal claims rather than the narrative presentation found in traditional case studies, and thus enhances the important theoretical contributions of the book.

Second, by its nature, process-tracing evidence is assessed at a very low level of granularity. Fairfield meticulously reconstructs how business leaders, politicians, and technocrats grappled with each of several dozen attempts to reform tax law, and traces the causal role of potential disinvestment by business and the instrumental power business actors could exercise in the thinking and actions of individual and collective actors involved in policy formation. The evidence in each case study is deeply satisfying and the account of how business shapes tax policy is persuasive. Yet one wonders whether something is obscured because of the granularity of the analysis that treats each of several dozen reform episodes as a separate case in which a causal process is traced. To what extent are these cases independent from one another, and therefore each shedding light on the causes of business power and the effects of that power on tax policy outcomes? Or to what extent do causal processes operating at higher levels of aggregation (e.g. countries or presidential administrations) affect policy outcomes?

Relatedly, one also wonders about the causal depth of instrumental power as an explanation for tax policy outcomes. Fairfield's theory holds that instrumental power derives from two types of sources: the resources (especially cohesion) at the disposal of business actors, and the relationships they have with policymakers (especially those institutionalized through partisan linkages or formal consultation practices). Yet the book does not explore the origins of that cohesion and those relationships. Take the case of Chile, where historians (e.g. Thomas C. Wright *Landowners and Reform in Chile*, 1982 and Maurice Zeitlin *The Civil Wars in Chile*, 1984) have famously demonstrated that these very characteristics of Chilean business elites held to a striking extent over decades and centuries. Thus the continuities across episodes observed by Fairfield in each of the countries replicate patterns identified by scholars in earlier historical periods. What are the historical roots of those long-term continuities in business power? And do these deeper causal factors underlie its causal effect? Are partisan linkages, institutionalized consultation, and business cohesion a consequence of some deeper structural or institutional

conditions that (for example) make Chilean business so able to influence tax policy outcomes? If so, the careful process tracing of how consultation and cohesion allow business to stymie tax reform will not shed light on the deeper causes that explain persistent inequality in Chile. As a by-product of her emphasis on precisely evaluating how business power shapes discrete policy choices, Fairfield misses an opportunity to more carefully position her work with respect to more structural and historical accounts of political economy in Latin America and thus speak to scholarship on long-term continuities in social, political, and economic inequality.

In all, Fairfield has provided a strikingly clear and compelling account of how business shapes taxation in contemporary Latin America. The book deserves attention from scholars of taxation and other aspects of political economy and public policy, both in that region and far beyond. In addition to its methodological contributions and to the new agendas it opens in the study of taxation, subsequent scholarship might also draw on this book and fruitfully assess whether business power operates similarly in realms beyond taxation—one wonders, for example, whether policy responses to the growing flows of immigration into Argentina and Chile will be shaped by business power. Americanists, too, might draw on the insights of this book to enter dialogue with the growing scholarship on inequality and policy outcomes in the United States.

**Agenda Dynamics in Spain.** By Laura Chaqués-Bonafont, Frank R. Baumgartner, and Anna M. Palau. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. 292p. \$105.00.  
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— Thomas Jeffrey Miley, *University of Cambridge*

Since the outbreak of the Eurozone crisis, an increasing number of commentators have raised concerns about the damage done to the quality of democracy by the virtual imposition of austerity across much of the continent, especially in the countries that find themselves at the eye of the financial storm.

Spain is of course one of these countries, and there is a new volume out that provides a copious amount of rich empirical evidence documenting the nature and scope of the transformations under way, working to reconfigure the functioning of the country's representative democratic institutions. The book, *Agenda Dynamics in Spain*, co-authored by Laura Chaqués-Bonafont, Anna M. Palau, and Frank R. Baumgartner, is the third volume to appear in a new Palgrave MacMillan series focusing on the Comparative Studies of Political Agendas. It is part of a broader and ambitious comparative research agenda called the Comparative Agendas Project.

Chaqués-Bonafont, Palau, and Baumgartner set out to “explain how and why policy issues get on the agenda” in

Spain, with a focus not only on “policy preferences and institutional factors,” but also on “flows of information, or attention” (p. 3). To this end, the authors compile an enormous amount of information—in all, “more than 190,000 records of data”—that together provide an unprecedentedly robust sketch of policy, parliamentary, and media priorities as they have evolved over time.

The amount of work that went into the compilation of this data is most impressive. As the authors inform us, these “data sets were specifically designed to be comprehensive, that is, they are based not on a sample but contain the entire number of bills, legislative acts, and oral questions introduced in the Parliament.” As if that weren't enough, they also include “Prime Minister speeches and party manifestos . . . all coded at the quasi-sentence level.” So too do they include “the total number of stories published in the media front pages of the two most read newspapers in Spain”—namely, *El País* and *El Mundo*. Finally, they have created a composite indicator of “public mood” as well (pp. 14, 20).

The authors are to be commended for this herculean empirical contribution, one which is sure to prove extremely useful for specialists on Spain and comparative scholars, quantitative and qualitative alike.

The book's most impressive database is of the “political agenda” proper, including laws, bills, speeches, oral questions, and party manifestos. The compilation of all these indicators allows for a precise and meticulous tracking of the policy agenda at the level of the Spanish Parliament. Most helpfully, this “political agenda” database has been coded in accordance with an “exhaustive set of topic codes and subcodes,” which together will allow future users “to locate easily all the oral questions, bills or laws introduced in any policy domain” (p. 21).

The main trends the authors themselves trace from this database are indeed disturbing. For starters, the authors sketch a hollowing out of the Parliament as an arena of democratic debate. In their words: “[m]ore than ever, the Spanish Parliament is a political arena that governmental actors simply deny by, among other things, avoiding political debate and governing by decree-law” (p. 13).

The increasing concentration of power in the hands of the executive vis-à-vis the legislature would perhaps be less disconcerting if it enabled the government to more effectively implement its mandate. But there is little evidence of any trend to this effect; on the contrary, between 1982 and 2011, the authors report the opposite tendency, towards declining mandate-responsiveness, at least as measured by “the number (and percentage) of issues that are mentioned in the party manifesto as important issues but never receive any attention in the speeches or executive bills” (p. 245).

But the bulk of the authors' insightful critique of the trajectory of performance of Spanish democracy has less to do with the criterion of responsiveness, however measured, than it does with the criterion of democratic responsibility.