

founder, Ronald Inglehart. A first, and important, conclusion advanced by the book is that there is no general downward trend with regard to political and social trust, as has been often claimed. While there are obvious fluctuations in levels of political trust today, the author shows that we cannot observe clear trends over time. Norris uses a vast array of data to operationalize competence, impartiality, and integrity, concluding that there is no universal relationship between these features and levels of political trust. Here, the consideration that citizens also need access to reliable information about how competent their government really is plays a central role.

The V-Dem Institute in Gothenburg, Sweden, has compiled an authoritative index on levels of freedom of the press and freedom of information. In their data, Denmark and Germany are typical examples of societies with a free information flow, while typical examples of societies without this freedom are Russia and China. By taking into account the freedom of information in a society, the apparent puzzle of the absence of a strong correlation between trustworthiness and levels of trust can be solved. In free and open societies, we do observe a positive relationship between (objective) quality indicators, on the one hand, and levels of political trust, on the other. In those countries even more “critical citizens” will reward the political system with high levels of political trust when the institutions actually deliver. This means that in a vast range of countries, common assumptions are actually confirmed: citizens have sufficient and reliable information to judge how corrupt their government is, and they will base their level of trust on this information. In those countries, political trust is an important component of a virtuous cycle, where good governance leads to higher level of trust. However, it is important not just that information is freely available, but also that citizens need the knowledge and the interest to interpret this information. Citizens within liberal democracies, particularly those with a higher education, are remarkably successful in judging in a more or less objective manner how trustworthy their government is. This necessarily implies a high level of inequality in terms of citizens’ ability to not only access but interpret information on good governance in their country. However, this topic does not receive all that much attention in the book.

In authoritarian regimes a totally different picture emerges, as there are no significant connections between objective indicators for the quality of government and levels of political trust. In these regimes, citizens do not have access to independent information to judge whether the government is trustworthy or not. This is an important insight, as it implies that political trust acquires a totally different meaning in liberal versus authoritarian settings. One might quibble, however, about the concepts applied here. When citizens in authoritarian regimes still say they “trust” government, this is labeled

as “credulous trust.” The adjective implies, according to the dictionary, that there is an “(over)readiness to believe on weak or insufficient grounds.” But the use of this modifier can easily be interpreted as a suggestion that citizens themselves are too eager to believe authorities. Yet, the V-Dem index actually measures the extent to which citizens have access to any reliable information. If the entire media system is controlled by the state, and if a culture of fear is imposed from above, it can hardly be called credulity when citizens just accept the available information about their government. A crucial insight of this volume, thus, is that a free media serves as a crucial link in the causal chain between quality of government and political trust. As the subtitle implies, with a subtle reference to Lenin, “trust but verify.” For those who can actually verify, this idea seems quite robust.

The statistical analyses in the book are clearly explained and convincing. For the figures, however, one would appreciate more information about the crucial variable of open access to information. In most of the figures, this variable is simply dichotomized, and I can tell from my own experience that this is a highly effective way to convey the argument to students. But in this way, a lot of information is lost. We get one group of open societies, ranging from Denmark to Bolivia, and a group of closed societies, ranging from Croatia to China. This raises the question, however, of whether the mechanism of “imperative trust” (if we want to avoid the concept of “credulous trust”) is equally strong in Croatia as in China.

This important work by Pippa Norris brings new insights to the debate on the relationship between quality of government, political trust, and freedom of information, opening new areas for future research and discussion in the discipline. Some readers will emphasize the finding about the objective foundation of trust in liberal democracies, while others will stress the argument in the context of authoritarian regimes. By framing the discussion in this manner, Norris has made an important contribution to academic and theoretical debates about political trust for years to come.

The Repoliticization of the Welfare State. By Ian McManus. Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2022. 234p. \$80.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

Election Campaigns and Welfare State Change: Democratic Linkage and Leadership under Pressure. By Staffan Kumlin and Achim Goerres. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. 240p. \$85.00 cloth.
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What is the nature of change in advanced welfare states, and how should we characterize their political dynamics?

For many years, there have been three dominant analytic frames in welfare state analysis, all of which have tended to sideline questions of partisan politics. The most prominent is Paul Pierson's "new politics" approach (*Dismantling the Welfare State: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment*, 1994), which predicts that, due to the rise of large self-interested welfare constituencies, risk-averse politicians of any partisan persuasion should be unwilling to make cuts to the welfare state. In the early 2000s, we saw the emergence of gradualist theories of welfare change, which acknowledged that welfare states were not entirely stagnant. These accounts focused on largely apolitical and institutionally driven changes to welfare states. More recently, we have seen the popularity of demand-side accounts focusing on the determinants of individual-level preferences over social policy and redistribution. This approach has tended to sideline the role of parties entirely, implicitly assuming that they unproblematically reflect the interests of the median voter.

Two recent books, *The Repoliticization of the Welfare State* by Ian McManus and *Election Campaigns and Welfare State Change* by Staffan Kumlin and Achim Goerres, also grapple with questions of welfare state dynamics. In contrast to the "new politics" approach, however, both start from the premise that we need to understand the dynamics of welfare state *change*. Moreover, their analyses of such change do not rest on gradualist accounts of institutional change or bottom-up voter-driven contestation. Instead, both works represent a welcome return to the study of how political parties and party–society linkages shape welfare politics.

McManus's monograph advances the argument that, after a period of depoliticization of welfare in the 1990s and early 2000s, the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) fundamentally re-polarized welfare politics. Before the crisis, McManus argues, party positions on welfare policies had converged on a neoliberal model of reduced social spending and liberalized welfare states. This convergence was largely driven by leftist parties shifting to the right on social welfare issues. The financial crisis, however, motivated a schism between mainstream parties on the Left and the Right. Today, governing center-right parties have moved right on welfare to signal their commitment to fiscal austerity. Their mainstream left counterparts, in contrast, have returned to advocating benefit expansion and challenging the logic of market fundamentalism.

McManus brings a diverse array of evidence to assess the changing nature of party competition over welfare policy, including cross-country regressions on social spending from 24 countries, analyses of post-GFC party manifestos, and a series of country case studies. His book is most compelling in the qualitative case chapters, which cover the spectrum of welfare state "worlds": the liberal United Kingdom, continental Germany, social democratic Sweden, Southern European Spain, and East European Czech Republic. These

provide a rich narrative about the emergent domestic consensus on welfare policies as of the 1990s, how European commitments affected welfare budgets, and how the crisis intersected with existing institutional welfare structures to limit or exacerbate polarization in the post-GFC era. The country case studies convincingly elucidate potential mechanisms around voter-driven change, as left parties responded to radicalized crisis-affected constituents.

However, the argument that the GFC drove party polarization across the broader universe of 24 country cases is not quite as persuasive. For example, the general claim that party positions on welfare have become polarized in the postcrisis period is difficult to assess, given the absence of baseline data on differences in party manifestos on welfare issues before the crisis. Similarly, although the regression models suggest that the GFC promoted pronounced partisan differences in social spending post-GFC, there was no sustained engagement clarifying how this modeling strategy related to earlier studies positing programmatic left/right differences for both old and new social risks.

Whereas McManus's analysis of welfare state politics focuses on the reemergence of broad left/right differences in support for the welfare state in the postcrisis era, Kumlin and Goerres's *Election Campaigns and Welfare State Change* offers a textured investigation of how the political messages communicated by parties during election campaigns comport with existing theories of welfare state continuity and change. The authors cast an ambitious theoretical net, forcing a reconsideration of both the politics of welfare and of the effectiveness of representative democracy in an era of fiscal reforms.

Kumlin and Goerres start by presenting a helpful analytic framework for assessing how political elites shape welfare reform. It is organized around the theoretical concepts of blame avoidance, democratic linkage, and democratic leadership. Blame avoidance, of course, stems from Pierson's classic analysis of the "new politics" of the welfare state, whereby political elites are unlikely to actively discuss the need for unpopular welfare reforms. In contrast, a linkage model of reform exists when elites, understood as parties, present distinct platforms that clearly state their policy priorities. Here, citizens vote for the party platform that most closely approximates their preferences, and governments translate their electoral programs into policy. The linkage model implies that elites will actively discuss (rather than obfuscate) the pressures facing contemporary welfare states and the policy changes they propose to resolve these pressures and that left versus right parties will offer voters clear choices of policy platforms. Finally, the leadership model implies that political elites facilitate welfare state change through persuasion. Using both cognitive and normative arguments, elites may change voters' views on the necessity and desirability of reform.

Empirically, the book is divided into two sections, one focusing on campaign messages and the other on voter

responses. Together, these two lenses are used to reflect on the health of democratic practice in mature welfare states. To analyze the political messaging coming from party elites, the authors code dominant themes across 172 election campaigns in 18 West European countries between 1978 and 2010, using election campaign reports from academic journals. This broad cross-national approach is complemented by the coding of party congress speeches of prime ministerial candidates in Sweden, Norway, and Germany during election years. The resultant datasets are then used to assess the degree to which welfare politics reflects blame avoidance or linkage approaches. The second half of the book uses a series of three survey experiments from the same countries in the 2010s to similarly interrogate the mechanisms of voter responsiveness associated with linkage versus leadership accounts of welfare state change.

In addition to its welcome theoretical focus on the two-way relationship between party messages and voter responses, an additional strength of Kumlin and Goerres's analysis is the care with which they interpret their findings. For example, in their presentation of election campaign content, they report that the pressures facing European welfare states (such as population aging or immigration) have been discussed more frequently over time, casting doubt on simple "blame avoidance" accounts. And yet, although they find some evidence in favor of democratic choice and linkage (in that parties are at least willing to talk about the reform pressures facing welfare states), they are careful to note that not all observable implications of the theory are borne out by their evidence. The authors are similarly sensitive to nuance in their discussion of the experimental results around public responses to campaign messaging, neither overplaying nor underplaying their findings in favor of a preferred theory.

To tie the book's disparate theoretical findings together, the conclusion offers a thoughtful assessment of the state of representative democracy. Theirs is a measured but somewhat pessimistic take on the health of both democratic linkage and ideational leadership, driven by the inability of parties to convey clear programmatic differences and their penchant for selectively focusing campaigns on popular dimensions of welfare policy.

Reading these two books together may open interesting avenues for debate. One is about how different conceptualizations may shape our understanding of the nature of welfare politics in recent years. For example, McManus views the 1990–2008 period as one of neoliberal ascendance, in which social policy promoted economic over social goals (pp. 52–53). Much of the cross-country empirical evidence focuses on aggregate levels of spending or party support for overall patterns of benefit expansions versus cuts. Kumlin and Goerres take a different approach. They define neoliberalism more narrowly and make a

sharp distinction between the neoliberal benefit cuts of the 1980s and what they view as the qualitatively distinct activation/social investment policies of the 1990s. This conceptual approach, as well as their analysis of party communication around welfare "sub-issues," promotes an emphasis on how parties trade off different types of messages. Consider the two books' discussion of the German case in the pre-GFC era. McManus in chapter 4 argues that Germany's pre-GFC dynamic was one of "widespread acceptance of neoliberal-inspired welfare reforms and social spending cuts" (p. 71). In contrast, even though in chapter 7 Kumlin and Goerres acknowledge the cuts in social rights associated with the Hartz reforms, they also highlight how at the same time the SPD and CDU competed to expand "social democratic" policies enabling women to better balance family obligations and employment.

Despite their different evidentiary bases, both books agree that *prior* to the GFC, partisan differences over policy (however we may characterize them) were relatively small. Had Kumlin and Goerres been able to extend their analysis of campaign speeches forward in time, beyond 2010, one wonders whether their campaign analyses would have indicated a polarization of left versus right party positions à la McManus's claims. Intuitively, this seems plausible. But it also brings us full circle to *Election Campaigns and Welfare State Change's* concluding discussion linking political communication to the robustness of representative democracy. If the global financial crisis did indeed motivate parties to once again convey clear programmatic differences to voters while also promoting the rise of often xenophobic radical political formations, what conclusions should we draw about the quality of democratic representation?

Future work on how party–citizen relations affect both the welfare state and the health of democracy will have much to gain from grappling with the concepts and questions explored by McManus, Kumlin, and Goerres.

Evangelicals and Electoral Politics in Latin America: A Kingdom of This World. By Taylor C. Boas. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023. 315p. \$99.99 cloth.
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As conversion to Protestantism exploded across Latin America beginning in the 1960s and 1970s, it was likely inevitable that some of the new converts would end up in elective office. Evangelicals now constitute large minorities in several countries and could surpass Catholics as a percentage of the populations of Guatemala and Brazil by the 2030s—yet in no country in the region have evangelicals in elected office risen to their percentage of the general population. (In this review, as in Boas's book and across Latin America,