

Both works are excellent examples of the importance of extensive field research in political science. Over a span of four years, Bersch conducted more than 200 interviews with ministers, policy makers, politicians, and members of civil society, among others. She analyzed these qualitative data through a controlled comparison of Argentina's and Brazil's health and transport sectors and process-tracing within cases across a span of 25 years. The process-tracing is particularly powerful: it shows, for example, that the rare instances in which Argentina engaged in gradual reform and Brazil in wholesale reform produced positive and negative repercussions, respectively. Gibson conducted more than two years of fieldwork during which he collected original quantitative and qualitative data on *sanitarista* officeholding across time in Brazil's major cities. He analyzed these data following a mixed-methods strategy, combining pooled time-series regressions, fuzzy sets, and subnational comparative historical analysis. All three methodological approaches aim to answer the same research question: the role of *sanitaristas'* holding office in increasing access to public health and reducing infant mortality. The regression identified associations, the fuzzy sets specified conditions, and the case studies explained the mechanisms by which holding office leads to social development.

These two books nicely complement and challenge each other in a number of ways that merit further research. On the one hand, Bersch shows that overhaul reforms are decidedly inferior to gradual change. In Gibson's case, however, *sanitaristas'* influence emerges in the context of a complete overhaul of the system: a transition to democracy, a constitutional reform, and a sweeping health reform (as Lindsay Mayka convincingly shows in *Building Participatory Institutions in Latin America*, 2019). One may wonder whether the *sanitaristas'* type of influence was uniquely successful because of this window of opportunity that entirely reformed the system. Although it took years for the institutions discussed in Gibson's book to be consolidated, the structural reform of federal legislation is partly what started this process and what, arguably, made it successful. In other words, is it possible that a wholesale reform succeeds in the long term in the presence of "pragmatic publics"? On the other hand, whereas Bersch's focus is on the national level, Gibson studies the local level. This difference opens up questions regarding the unit of analysis of each of these books. Does *Movement-Driven Development* travel to the national level? In scaling up the unit of analysis, it is plausible to argue that having pragmatist activists occupy top offices at the national level also strengthens state institutions. Santiago Anria's findings in *When Movements Become Parties* (2018) seem to point in that direction. In the case of *When Democracies Deliver*, scaling down the unit of analysis would mean incorporating the possibility that slow institutional change emerges from the subnational level,

especially in the case of the large two federations included in this book.

**Inequality After the Transition: Political Parties, Party Systems, and Social Policy in Southern and Postcommunist Europe.** By Ekrem Karakoç. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 352p. \$95.00 cloth.

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The post-1989 transition from communism in Central East Europe (CEE) has been quite disappointing to those who expected that states in the region would "rejoin the West" as market democracies. Inter alia, most of these states have not consolidated political parties, party systems, or stable governing coalitions. Most have also become increasingly inequalitarian over the past 30 years. Ekrem Karakoç's important book presents a fresh argument that links these two outcomes, explaining how and why volatility in their political systems produces and reproduces socioeconomic inequality in new democracies. He shows that greater volatility in CEE political systems produces more social spending and that this spending is targeted toward the middle class and largely excludes the poor. Beginning with a comparative case study of Poland and the Czech Republic, he then extends the argument to the relatively new democracies of Turkey and Spain. In the process, Karakoç contributes to the welfare state literature by proposing a new structured relationship among political institutions, social strata, and distributive outcomes in new democracies.

The author begins with evidence that the poor, defined as the bottom quintile in each case, vote at lower rates than other social strata. As nonmobilized, least-likely voters, they have relatively little to offer candidates and parties in elections. Karakoç advocates analyzing electoral politics not in terms of the "median voter" but of the "median likely voter," who is nonpoor. Nonvoting by itself likely disadvantages the poor in distributive politics, but Karakoç argues that this disadvantage is exacerbated in systems that have high levels of political volatility and weak, unstable coalition governments. In such systems, where parties often fail to survive from one election to the next, political leaders constantly craft and recraft strategies to attract voters by promising them social benefits. Societal groups that are organized and vote at relatively high levels—unionized workers and especially pensioners—represent the best prospects for electoral support, so benefit most from social expenditures. The poor get the least. However, the groups that obtain benefits form few and weak attachments to parties, at least in comparison to electorates in established European democracies. Turnover in governing parties is high and coalitions fragile. As long as parties face constant uncertainty and are always at risk of losing

elections or disappearing from the political system entirely, they will rely on promises of benefits targeted to mobilized middle-class strata to win electoral support. Social spending will, as a consequence, become higher, more targeted toward nonpoor organized voters, and less redistributive. When party systems stabilize, welfare systems can be reformed, spending controlled, and benefits made more pro-poor, lessening inequality.

Karakoç structures his argument around two pairs of “most similar systems”: postcommunist Poland and the Czech Republic, and post-authoritarian Turkey and Spain. He relies on comparisons both between and within these cases. According to the logic of his argument, states with more stable politics have less inequality. A state with volatile politics that stabilize at some point becomes more egalitarian. So, in Poland low voter turnout and a volatile party system from 1989–2011 produced high social expenditures and high inequality. The Czech Republic’s higher voter turnout and relatively stable system during the same period produced significantly lower and more egalitarian social expenditures. Turkey’s volatile party system produced a hierarchical social policy and increased targeted spending until 2002; when the party system stabilized, hierarchy in social policy was reduced, and spending on the poor increased. In Spain, higher turnout and lower volatility produced an incremental welfare policy.

Karakoç’s analysis necessarily depends on multiple sets of statistics and definitions of what they measure, and he usually has comparable high-quality statistics for these European cases. Most statistics are straightforward: voting by income, seat turnover in legislatures’ seats to measure volatility, the bottom quintile as a rough estimate for the poor. Karakoç’s measure of targeted welfare expenditures versus expenditures that benefit everyone, however, is more debatable. He assumes that all monetary transfers—that is, pensions, unemployment and family benefits, and the like—are targeted to middle-income groups, whereas health care and education spending benefit everyone, including the poor. These are reasonable but imperfect assumptions. Poverty in these states tends to be highest among large families and children, and health care spending may vary greatly across regions and between urban and rural areas. Family benefits, depending on their structure, may well cover some of the poor, whereas expenditures on health may barely reach them. The author might have supplemented this data with systematic data on the introduction, scale, cuts, or elimination of means-tested benefits that (at least in theory) go only to the poor. These benefits are discussed in some places, but not systematically. Including them would give a clearer idea of what was given to and taken from those clearly recognized as poor.

One of the most interesting and valuable aspects of Karakoç’s study is that it brings societal groups and their linkages to political parties back into the center of politics, especially in the CEE. Although much of the literature continues to treat CEE societies as poorly organized, scholars

have recognized the political influence of pensioners in individual polities. Karakoç’s study provides a systematic transnational explanation for pensioners’ high political salience. Unions and organized labor have been viewed as nearly irrelevant politically in the postcommunist states, beyond the argument that populations use elections to punish governments for high unemployment. Karakoç challenges that view of organized labor, especially for Poland, showing that the minority who remained in unions have been sufficiently politically engaged to pressure parties for social payments, if not to influence broader economic policy. For each of his cases, Karakoç constructs party–social group linkages and connects them with electoral support. In sum, he presents a novel and convincing analysis that makes sense of both politics and welfare outcomes in new democracies.

I have a few issues, however, with the book. The analysis does not, in fact, explain overall inequality, which is a product of many factors: it explains inequalitarian distributive outcomes that are systematically produced by the political process. Most of the analysis focuses on pensions, unemployment, and other benefits, which redistribute but do not replace market outcomes. In addition, parties and coalitions in these cases also contribute to inequality by tolerating corruption that enriches politically connected elites. Karakoç recognizes that groups allied with the old authoritarian regime enjoy privileges post-transition, but these privileges are often conferred informally, outside the formal policy making he studies. Granting that corruption is impossible to measure, its connection to political parties and inequality should still be recognized. The author might also have addressed the questions why most who benefit from parties’ social policies do not form attachments and why systems stabilize when they do.

Nevertheless, Karakoç’s study makes important contributions to the literatures on democratization and welfare states. It shows that weakly institutionalized parties are poor social policy makers. Desperate to survive the next election, they expand the welfare state while ignoring the poor. Karakoç points to two paths out of this dysfunctional pattern: party systems may stabilize, or the poor may mobilize and increase their electoral participation. He suggests that mobilization of the poor by populist parties may increase equality, raising the critical question whether populism is in fact a corrective to a form of democracy that generates growing inequality.

**Tough on Crime: The Rise of Punitive Populism in Latin America.** By Michelle D. Bonner. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019. 220p. \$40.00 cloth.  
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“Tough-on-crime” rhetoric and policies have been a common feature in Latin American political campaigns and are