

indispensable reference in university libraries. In all, it is a remarkable compact synthesis on this sprawling subject.

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars,
Washington, DC

ALEXANDER WILDE

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X11000289

Ruth Berins Collier and Samuel Handlin (eds.), *Reorganizing Popular Politics: Participation and the New Interest Regime in Latin America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), pp. x + 394, \$65.00, \$30.00 pb.

Since the onset of neoliberal economics throughout Latin America in the 1980s, much has been written concerning new forms of popular political participation and involvement. A by now huge literature has focused on social movements, but much of it has concentrated either on theoretical, often abstract concerns or on in-depth case studies of a particular movement in a single country. What has not been done – up until the appearance of this book – has been rigorously comparative work across nations that produce generalisable conclusions and/or testable hypotheses.

Collier and Handlin and their colleagues (several of whom were members of a graduate seminar where the project has its origins) have produced a remarkable volume – there is no other word for it. Their fundamental research question rests on the assumption that the ‘urban popular interest regime, [or] the organizations through which the urban popular sectors, or the lower and lower middle classes, have sought to pursue their interests’ (p. 4) has crucially changed. The shift has been one from unions as the most important mechanism to, under market-oriented models, a proliferation of popular associations, including community-based associations and NGOs. According to Collier and Handlin, differences across these two models not only include unions versus popular associations but also varying roles for political parties (primary in the earlier period, much less so today) and structural/organisational differences (hierarchical and centralised vs. horizontal and network-based). Between these two extremes lies a middle ground that comprises the heart of this study: identifying the various dimensions along which countries and cities can vary, including channels for the expression of popular voices, organisational structures for those voices, and the effectiveness of associations in promoting popular demands and/or connecting with political parties (p. 7).

To these ends Collier and her team focused on the large primate capital cities of four countries – Argentina and Buenos Aires, Chile and Santiago, Peru and Lima, and Venezuela and Caracas – and carried out surveys (N = 5,600) in all four cities. These surveys used a random sample of the entire city as well as oversampling in eight popular ‘focus’ districts in each. In addition, Collier also interviewed leaders in neighbourhood, district, regional and national associations who were active in the focus districts, generating a total of 960 associations. All told, Collier and Handlin gathered up an extraordinarily rich and unique database that, in terms of specificity and focus, goes far beyond the usual national samples that so much work depends on. Their decision to concentrate on capital cities, and especially on low-income districts that are themselves divided by degree of poverty and leftist electoral support, generates a remarkable portrait of low-income urban political involvement in the four cities.

Any sort of detailed summary is simply out of the question in a review of this nature. The book is dense as well as intense; its structure allows the several

contributors to proceed methodically and to cover a whole range of topics, including the varying logic of collective action that the surveys uncovered, individual-level participation and associational linkages to party politics, and the several repertoires employed by associations in their dealings with state institutions, labour unions and political parties. The book repays careful reading and re-reading; some of the acronyms (UP-Hub, A-Net) and multiple definitions given to ‘scaling’ (from embeddedness to nodal NGOs to flexible fronts), for example, require some time to sink in. But the various authors are careful to use their terminologies consistently across chapters (not always the case in a multi-author work), and all such efforts by the reader are richly rewarded.

Country and, perhaps even more, city specialists will find endless ideas, themes and puzzles to consider through this book. The various levels on and by which future comparative work can be generated because of Collier and Handlin’s research are endless; for example, how far can the basic arguments and conclusions concerning the switch from union- and party-based participation to associational involvement go? Do they apply not only to most other Latin American nations but to other third world and perhaps even first world nations as well? Will certain city-level factors influence the general conclusions of the book? If so, what are they, and how might they increase or decrease the likelihood that the overall argument will hold?

Collier, Handlin et al. are to be congratulated on this volume. Its scope of inquiry and the care with which the whole effort was carried through are both remarkable, and it absolutely represents a distinct step forward in our understanding of how and why mass politics in Latin America not only operates but also has changed over time.

University of Texas, Austin

HENRY A. DIETZ

J. Lat. Amer. Stud. 43 (2011). doi:10.1017/S0022216X11000290

Ronald Bruce St. John, *Toledo’s Peru: Vision and Reality* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010), pp. xxiv + 253, \$44.95, hb.

As this review was written, in advance of the April 2011 presidential elections, Alejandro Toledo’s chances of becoming Peru’s next president appeared to be fast improving. It is therefore a timely moment for a book on his first term in the job (2001–6), not least because – in common with predecessors like Fernando Belaúnde and Alan García – few would have predicted such an eventuality when his first term ended. For much of his period in office, Toledo was a deeply unpopular president whose public opinion ratings remained in single-digit territory for most of those five years, picking up only at the end when his departure was already in sight.

Ronald Bruce St. John’s book therefore helps us re-evaluate Toledo as a political actor. On balance it is a positive account, although the negatives are not swept under the carpet. Toledo is presented as a man with a vision; his problem was that he was not very good at delivering on that vision. He is seen as a genuine democrat who sought to give liberal economics *a la peruana* a ‘human face’. The book thus seeks to rise above the personal tittle-tattle that characterised much comment on Toledo during his presidency. It also projects very strongly the message that Toledo was seeking to promote in his re-election bid in early 2011.

The book deals with a number of important themes. Prime among these is the difficulty facing countries like Peru, whose comparative advantage lies in extractive industries that provide export and treasury income but which do little to boost