

Another curious omission is popular entertainment. Many of the most recognizable examples of right-wing repression of sexuality are absent. There is little discussion of Tropicalia and only a passing reference to the exiling of Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, the latter of whom embodied many of the regime's anxieties about sexuality. Likewise, discussion of popular performers such as the outlandish drag troupe Dzi Croquettes (who fled the regime for Paris) might have given readers a stronger sense of what moralists were actually seeing, including some legitimately transgressive and threatening displays of gender deviance among the left.

As Tom Jobim famously warned, "*O Brasil não é para principiantes*" (Brazil is not for beginners). Neither is Cowan's book. This is a monograph for Brazilianists already well versed in the historical, anthropological, and political literature on Brazil. It is a dense and sometimes dizzying account of Brazilian bureaucracy and intragovernmental disputes—the glossary of acronyms comes in handy—that would probably leave undergraduates in survey courses adrift. Yet it is a monograph of great importance for those scholars of Brazil who think they know this particular period—as well as those who hope to understand its perilous present.

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Alberto Díaz-Cayeros, Federico Estévez, and Beatriz Magaloni, *The Political Logic of Poverty Relief: Electoral Strategies and Social Policy in Mexico*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016. Figures, tables, abbreviations, bibliography, index, 258 pp.; hardcover \$99.99, paperback \$29.99.

This book studies the electoral strategies and payoffs of antipoverty programs in Mexico, from Pronasol (Programa Nacional de Solidaridad) to Oportunidades. The expansion of antipoverty transfer programs in Latin America over the last two decades has encouraged a growing literature on their design and outcomes, on their contribution to evolving welfare institutions in the region, and on their electoral dimensions. This book contributes to all three strands of this literature, with a focus on Mexico. The discussion of the strategies and payoffs associated with antipoverty transfers stands out and helps organize the materials in the book.

This is an ambitious and, in places, complex book. It contains detailed analysis of policy, models, and data. It is hard to do justice to the rich set of findings and insights that emerge from the analysis in the space available for this review. The focus will be on providing a "narrative" summary of the main arguments, followed by some assessment of the book's achievements.

As the authors note, antipoverty transfers in Mexico provide fertile ground to study the electoral dimensions of poverty reduction policies. A break in the electoral strategies associated with antipoverty policy around the turn of the century suggests the presence of two regimes in Mexico: an earlier "clientelistic regime" followed by an "entitlement regime." The authors show that Mexico transitioned from the discretionary antipoverty transfers of Pronasol to the rules-based transfers under Oportunidades and FISM (Fondo de Aportaciones para la Infraestructura Municipal).

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To identify potential electoral strategies associated with antipoverty policies, it is useful to classify transfers across two of their key features. Transfers can be classified into discretionary or nondiscretionary, according to whether politicians are able to direct resources in line with electoral strategies. Transfers can also be classified into excludable or nonexcludable, according to whether politicians are able to control access to the resources that are transferred. Regular household transfers in cash or in kind are characteristically excludable, whereas public goods—hospitals, roads, and schools, for example—are nonexcludable. Discretionary and excludable household transfers are typically clientelistic, an exchange of transfers for votes. Nondiscretionary or rules-based household transfers are described in the book as entitlements.

Antipoverty policies are examined in the context of the electoral strategies they support. One strand of research reported in the book assesses the electoral effectiveness of different types of transfers. The authors find that direct household transfers are more effective than public goods, measured in terms of community per capita expenditure, in generating votes. They also find that clientelistic transfers are more effective than entitlement transfers as a vote-buying strategy. This result emerges from a comparison of beneficiaries and a matched sample of presidential exit poll respondents. Public goods provision appears to be less effective as a vote-buying strategy and inherently risky because nonexcludable.

The authors link changes in the mix of household transfers and public goods, electoral investment portfolios, to particular strategies and political conditions. Discretionary direct transfers are employed to reward core voters and to sustain support for local political machines. They maximize electoral support among core voters. Discretionary public goods support the population at large and are therefore appropriate in conditions where incumbents face the need to expand their base of support.

The analysis of Pronasol expenditure at the municipal level provides support for these predictions. Introduced in 1988 to address rising poverty following liberalization, it represented a mix of direct transfers to households and infrastructure support. It was designed and implemented with a view to stemming challenges to the longstanding rule of the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucionalista). Analysis of the distribution of Pronasol funds across municipalities confirms the concentration of household transfers among municipalities with core PRI electoral support. Over time, the composition of Pronasol's portfolio shows a rise in the share of direct transfers relative to public goods, as predicted.

The 2000 presidential election signals a transition toward an entitlement regime in poverty policy. Oportunidades becomes the lead program providing direct transfers, a rules-based program compared to Pronasol. The public goods component of Pronasol gives way to FISM, with a formula to allocate its budget to local authorities and decentralized implementation. It constitutes a shift toward a nondiscretionary portfolio. The authors show the presence of significant electoral benefits for the incumbent president, again based on a comparison of beneficiaries and a matched sample among exit poll respondents. As they put it, "Oportunidades worked to create an electoral constituency for the right-wing party among poor voters" (178).

The analysis combines a conceptual approach linking transfer types and electoral strategies, a detailed mapping of antipoverty policies and electoral outcomes at the municipal level, and statistical analysis to test the main hypotheses. This approach lends considerable weight and authority to the main findings. In places, the presentation of model equations and statistical results could have been more precise and easier to follow. The assessment of the relative effectiveness of alternative policy portfolios is an important contribution to the literature. It highlights an important new area of research.

For social policy specialists, the book throws light on the regime shift in antipoverty policy in Mexico, the transition from a clientelistic to an entitlement regime. While this topic lies at the core of the book, readers might feel a tiny little bit short-changed by the discussion of the causes of this regime shift. We are told the shift came about as a result of external events, the Zapatista rebellion and the financial crisis, leading to rising democratization, including stronger electoral competition. Improved state capacity that placed limits on the discretion of politicians merits a mention, too. It is hard to dispute the relevance of these shocks in the context of Mexico, but the regime shift is also present in other countries in the region, suggesting that deeper causal factors are at play.

The discussion in the book sheds considerable light on social policy in Mexico. The sections that examine developments elsewhere appear less sure-footed. The discussion on antipoverty policy in other countries in Latin America in chapter 1 contains an interesting classification of antipoverty policy regimes, ranging from clientelistic to universalistic. But it also opens up, for me, a set of questions left unexplored in the rest of the book. Along similar lines, chapter 8 contains a historical discussion of antipoverty policy, taking the reader back to the Poor Laws in England. I was not sure how helpful this discussion was at the end of the book.

Intriguingly, the authors conclude that conditional cash transfers “are part of a less centralized or less unified approach to social protection which was characteristic of poverty relief systems existing before the twentieth century” (198). My own reading of the literature is that recent antipoverty policy in the region is more in line with forward-looking debates on the future of welfare states than with their past. In Hemerijck’s view, the emerging social investment state represents “a *Gestalt switch*, from an orientation to social compensation toward citizenship empowerment, with state-provided or -regulated human capital investments and social service quality improvements throughout the life course” (2013, 39).

Díaz-Cayeros, Estévez, and Magaloni make a significant contribution to our understanding of the political dimensions of antipoverty policy in Mexico. They identify alternative electoral strategies associated with social policy. This helps explain the design and implementation of antipoverty policies. Their book will be required reading for students of Mexico’s social policy, for researchers interested in the politics of poverty reduction, and for Latin American specialists concerned with the shape of emerging welfare institutions in the region. Their headline finding is that while clientelism works to secure votes, it fails to reduce poverty. Rules-based transfers, on the other hand, are fully consistent with democracy and are welfare

enhancing. Their findings leave ample room for optimism about the eradication of poverty in the region.

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## REFERENCE

Hemerijck, Anton. 2013. *Changing Welfare States*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

David Close, *Nicaragua: Navigating the Politics of Democracy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2016. Bibliography, index, 231pp.; hardcover \$69.95, ebook \$69.95.

This book aims to analyze the process of political change that took place during the last four decades in Nicaragua. In this sense, the book talks about Nicaragua, yet it is not a descriptive work but a political science analysis of regime change and political instability based on a case study, although comparative logic is employed.

With this objective, the book begins with a definition of a political regime as the matrix of institutions and processes—formal and informal—that mediate between citizens and institutions. Thus, Close argues that political regimes—as Chelabi and Linz point out—indicate who has the right to govern, the instruments that are used to govern, how and by whom the political class is constituted, what are the interests for which the state operates, and what constitutes the ultimate end toward which the state operates. From this analytical base, the book points out and classifies the different types of regimes that Nicaragua has had from the 1930s until today, differentiating the characteristics of leadership, the years in which each was established and in which it collapsed, and who led each new regime. At the same time, these different regimes are also compared using the classification models created by the most prestigious academic institutions and think tanks.

In this analysis, Close's concern is not only the fact of the change itself but also the fact that throughout this intense process a democratic regime has not been consolidated in Nicaragua, although it seemed feasible during the last decade of the twentieth century. And that indeed, it did work for 16 years. Moreover, during the 1990s, many scholars believed that the transition processes from authoritarian regimes to democracies would bring the consolidation of polyarchies. However, it has not been like that in many latitudes, nor, unfortunately, in the country being analyzed. Precisely for this reason, the author warns that it is easy for a country with a society polarized in both political and cultural terms, with political actors who distrust each other, with a deeply rooted tradition of *caudillismo*, and with an extended spoils system, to end up eroding its democratic institutions. This is, to a large extent, what the book shows.

After an introduction on the theoretical premises, the book analyzes (between chapters 3 and 7) the different regimes that Nicaragua has traversed throughout the period analyzed: a personalist dictatorship (1936–79), a revolutionary avant-garde system (1979–84), a pluralistic electoral democracy (1984–2000), a “duopolistic”