

comparative compass of Latin American politics and the wide field of comparative political science itself.

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## **Fabián A. Borges, *Human Capital versus Basic Income: Ideology and Models of Anti-Poverty Programs in Latin America***

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Fabián A. Borges' book *Human Capital versus Basic Income: Ideology and Models of Anti-Poverty Programs in Latin America* is a very welcome contribution to our understanding of the emergence of conditional income transfers as the front-line policy instrument of poverty reduction in Latin America and of the influence of ideology in social policy.

Borges is particularly interested in the role of ideology in the adoption of conditional income transfers. Right-of-centre presidents and left-of-centre presidents introduced conditional income transfers but, as he notes, they were initially embraced by right-of-centre presidents (Mexico) and rejected by left-of-centre ones (Brazil). This runs counter to conventional accounts of the development of social protection in the region emphasising the leading role of labour organisations and left-wing parties.

Borges argues that the influence of ideology extends to the design and implementation of conditional income transfers, resulting in two distinct models: Mexico's 'Progresá' with its emphasis on strictly monitored conditions, and Brazil's 'Bolsa Família' with looser conditions. He argues that Progresá was easier on the eye for policy-makers committed to neoliberal principles because it identified poverty as primarily to do with deficits in human capital. The looser conditions of Bolsa Família, on the other hand, were likely to be more acceptable to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party, PT) as they came closer to the unconditional transfers advocated by basic-income supporters. Borges' discussion of the two models is more nuanced than is suggested by the book's title (arguably Bolsa Família is closer to a guaranteed minimum income rather than a basic income).

The book approaches the spread of conditional income transfers in Latin America as an example of policy diffusion heavily influenced by ideology. The term 'policy diffusion' could be used to describe a situation in which the same type of policy can be observed in many countries, such as individual retirement saving plans or conditional income transfers. More strictly, policy diffusion is

used to describe a situation in which countries implement specific types of policies because other countries have them. Borges takes the latter, stricter approach.

A substantial portion of the book is taken by a discussion of the features of conditional income transfer adoption in the countries of the region. This includes detailed case studies on key actors and influencers further supported by the estimates of a statistical model. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are argued to have played a significant role. The main conclusion is that the ideology of incumbents was a core factor facilitating the adoption of one or the other model. Borges finds that the Progresá model diffused vertically (from IFIs to countries) whereas the Bolsa Familia model diffused horizontally (from country to country).

An index of conditional income transfers in the region – based on their target population, incidence, design and the enforcement of conditions – highlights their differences and similarities. The index is deployed to test for the association existing between the ideology of presidents and the implementation of conditional income transfers. The analysis is extended to include presidential switches from left to right and vice versa.

The book is impressive in its detailed attention to country-level policy developments, its familiarity with the vast literature on conditional income transfers, and its judicious employment of statistical methods to test for multiple hypotheses regarding the emergence of the programmes. The author has taken care to write in an accessible and didactic format. This will guarantee a wide audience for the book.

The research reported in the book raises several interesting issues. As an ideal type, conditional income transfers have come to include a set of very diverse programmes. At their core, they can be distinguished from other anti-poverty interventions in that they combine a concern with both current consumption and social investment among groups in poverty. Research on how best to measure the relative balance of these concerns across conditional income transfers is essential to our understanding of their role and effectiveness. Borges has done this for our benefit.

The ideological position of presidents does most of the heavy lifting in Borges' analysis. Their ideological position on the left–right spectrum tells us about their policy priorities. Left-of-centre presidents worry primarily about consumption among the poor and favour universalistic policies. Right-of-centre presidents worry about social investment and favour narrowly targeted transfers. Borges' account is far from being as reductive as my account here. There are many examples of presidential policy stands contradicting these predictions. Fox extended Progresá to urban areas as 'Oportunidades' and Lagos introduced 'Chile Solidario', explicitly designed to be a small, targeted programme.

The focus on diffusion in the book unavoidably shifts attention towards policy and away from politics. It invites an exaggerated view of the role of IFIs in the spread of conditional income transfers. Policy diffusion is the IFIs' *raison d'être*. Borges' careful review of the available evidence and literature on this issue concludes that a combination of World Bank officers and domestic technocrats pushed the Progresá model. This will flatter the World Bank. In fact, most of the World Bank's social-protection lending to Latin America in the period covered by the book went to support Argentina's 'Jefes y Jefas' public-works programme.

Borges' book is an important contribution to our understanding of the emergence of conditional income transfers in Latin America. It deserves a wide readership among researchers, students, policy-makers and those with an interest in Latin American social policy and society.

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## **Christina Heatherton, *Arise! Global Radicalism in the Era of the Mexican Revolution***

**University of California Press, 2022, pp. x + 311**

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This book can be read in two ways: as a polemical indictment of capitalism coupled with an impassioned paean to its radical critics; or as a work of history locating the Mexican Revolution within a broader context of global – chiefly North American – socio-political protest. As a polemic it perhaps succeeds ('success' depending very much on the disposition of the reader). The book roams restlessly over a broad and diverse landscape, drawing on an impressive bibliography; it boldly links people, places and protests that, more commonly, are confined within narrower national boundaries (perhaps for good reason); and it is driven by earnest empathetic engagement – that is, high moral indignation laced with low-grade Marxist 'theory'. As for its status as a work of history, I naively assumed that – given its title – the book was about the Mexican Revolution and its international ramifications. However, 'in the era' signals that the author feels free to include any radical movement or activist of the early twentieth century (and, indeed, beyond), irrespective of any direct involvement in the revolution flagged in the title.

Two chapters – a third of the book – focus on a couple of radical women, Dorothy Healey and Elizabeth Catlett. As a labour organiser in Southern California in the 1930s, Healey worked with Mexican farmworkers (and others); though, it seems, she never went to Mexico. The connection – assumed rather than demonstrated – is that the Mexicans were profoundly influenced by events south of the border. Catlett, a Black communist artist in New York, settled in Mexico, where, she claims, 'the revolutionary atmosphere in which I developed [...] was determinant in my development' (p. 149). But by 1946 – the year Catlett arrived and the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party, PRI) was born – Mexico had demonstrably abandoned its revolutionary project, as Daniel Cosío Villegas declared in his celebrated essay 'La Crisis de México'. One chapter ('How to Make Love') deals with Alexandra Kollontai, who served as Soviet ambassador for six months in 1927 – suffering from the heat, altitude and unsuitable high heels (p. 116) – and had scant impact