

work. In America's case, nationalism and religion (often interconnected) present themselves as likely forces behind both the grid and the group dimensions of political culture. Anatol Lieven's recent book *America: Right or Wrong* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), makes this case quite persuasively, and presents a useful companion to Lockhart's analysis. The individualism that Protestant denominations brought to New England embraced such fundamentalism. From the Massachusetts Puritans who hanged witches in 1692 to the evangelicals backing America's current intervention in Iraq, religious extremism has influenced American political outcomes in ways that go well beyond the tenets of liberty.

The book's third analytical dimension draws upon historical institutionalism to explain path-dependent opportunities and constraints on formulating public policy, or even on accepting policy problems as legitimate issues for public engagement. This perspective will resonate strongly with many students of comparative public policy. While the question of how institutions change remains to be better explained, the influence of both formal and informal rules on policy capacity offers a promising path to differentiating policy paradigms within and between Europe, North America and Asia.

Applying the model to a policy domain that will be most familiar to readers of this journal, Professor Lockhart captures some of the dynamics differentiating American health policy from its Canadian counterpart. On the whole, Canada's cultural tolerance of both collectivism and egalitarianism goes a long way toward facilitating the kind of national health insurance system that American leaders are constrained from pursuing, even when so inclined. But readers familiar with Canadian federalism will appreciate that institutional fragmentation can also facilitate policy innovation, as illustrated by the expansion of Canadian health insurance through the competitive federalism of the 1970s and 1980s. The contrast with America's constraining institutional decentralization reveals how institutional influence can be contingent on cultural and historical forces that inspire opposing dynamics in Canada and the United States.

The Roots of American Exceptionalism provides a timely contribution to better understanding the United States. Since Canada's future depends so much on where the United States winds up at the end of this decade, elucidating the forces shaping American policy takes on critical importance. This book can stimulate insights that make puzzling through its pages worthwhile.

ANTHONY PERL *Simon Fraser University*

Mexico's Pivotal Democratic Election. Candidates, Voters, and the Presidential Campaign of 2000

Jorge I. Domínguez and Chappell Lawson, eds.

Stanford and La Jolla: Stanford University Press-Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, University of California, San Diego, 2004, pp. xxiv, 363

This book reads almost like the dissection of one single day: July 2, 2000, when Vicente Fox was elected president of Mexico. As an opposition candidate, Fox defeated the PRI, the party that had been in power for the longest period in modern world history. The title of this book is thus aptly chosen, because that day Mexican politics changed forever. It captures the uniqueness of that moment. Even if Fox's victory is understandable in retrospect, most analysts could not predict it. Indeed, as the events were unfolding, not even Fox himself was certain about the outcome. Francisco Labastida, PRI's candidate, was, until the last moment, certain he would win.

This collective book, written by a respectable list of analysts of Mexican politics, reviews this crucial election from several standpoints. Topics such as citizen

attitudes, coerced voting, electoral reforms, Fox's constituency, campaign strategies, PRI's primaries, television coverage, candidates' debates, negative campaigning and strategic voting are addressed. Collectively, and based on a large survey called Mexico 2000 Panel Study, the authors aim at demonstrating that "campaigns mattered" to explain the election's outcome. According to their findings, campaigns produced a shift in public perceptions that ended up transferring 12 per cent of voting intentions from Labastida to Fox (11), helped by limited party loyalty.

Of course, some contributions to the volume are more insightful than others, and help dispel some myths about the election. Kathleen Bruhn (131–132) correctly documents that the possibility of a united opposition front was merely theoretical, despite repeated attempts to forge it. The main opposition parties' origins, constituencies and platforms were simply too different, even excluding each other, to make a united front possible. From that perspective, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the other major opposition candidate, did not "steal" votes away from Fox, because they were appealing to very different voters. The contest between Fox and Cárdenas looked more like a no-holds-barred confrontation between alternative projects for the future of Mexico. Strategic voting contributed marginally to Fox's success, as documented by Beatriz Magaloni and Alejandro Poiré (269–292).

Moreover, Fox was not from the outset the natural option to replace the PRI. What Fox did, and here, as Bruhn suggests (133), lies the secret of his victory, was to conduct a very successful campaign in which he convinced undecided voters that he represented "change," defined exclusively in terms of alternation in power. In so doing, he captured the protest vote. Fox and his team were aware of the importance of television in shaping public opinion, so they relied on that medium more than any other candidate, with positive results, as documented by Chappell Lawson (187–209). They even made full use of negative campaigning, especially to lure weak Labastida supporters to Fox's side, and it paid off, as Alejandro Moreno shows (243–268). Fox's team even brilliantly succeeded in turning to his favour the embarrassing episode of May 23 (9) and created a new slogan: "*¡Hoy!*" (Today!). On election day, that slogan became the most memorable one—a fact that, by the way, the authors fail to report.

Wayne Cornelius (47–65) documents how the PRI's traditional tactics of vote buying and coercion became ineffective as new electoral regulations made it increasingly difficult to ensure coerced citizens would actually vote for the PRI or even turn out on election day. This latter finding is confirmed by Chappell Lawson and Joseph Klesner (67–87), who show that the low turnout of PRI supporters contributed to Fox's victory. James McCann found (157–183) this has little to do with divisions produced by the presidential primaries, practiced by the PRI for the first time ever, which actually broadened the PRI's appeal. PRI supporters simply neglected to cast their ballots, with grave consequences for Labastida.

This book provides good insight into the issue, yet the observations do not seem conclusive. Because of the methodology employed, and its many assumptions, one is left with the impression that the insight offered is only one among a number of possibilities. Mexico 2000 Panel Study, the survey most of the conclusions are based on, used samples that are not representative, as the authors themselves acknowledge (14). They are also aware that reinterviewing, as they did, involves a risk of contamination that may invalidate their conclusions regarding campaign effects.

The survey was carried out mostly by *Reforma* newspaper's public opinion research team. Ultimately, however, this survey and other *Reforma* surveys were unable to predict the election's outcome, let alone Fox's wide victory margin. This probably shows the limits of conventional quantitative methodologies to explain the issue at hand. A qualitative approach seems more appropriate here. For instance, the authors

are surprised that despite President Zedillo's popularity and success in bringing economic and political stability to Mexico, his political heir was unable to win the election. However, this seems all too natural from a Tocquevillean perspective, according to which regimes change not when they hit their lowest point in terms of efficiency and legitimacy but soon afterwards, when there is a relative recovery and the masses seize the opportunity for a safe transition. "Despite ... Zedillo ... many people were simply fed up with the ruling party" (7), the introduction to the book acknowledges. Joseph Klesner (91–122) also finds that attitudes toward the system explain voting for Fox more than anything else. Therefore, an investigation into the conditions that made people think Fox in 2000 was a safer way to get rid of the PRI than Cárdenas was in 1994 is missing from the study.

The authors have also overlooked the role played by President Zedillo to ensure the transition was completed. By announcing Fox's victory live on national television before Labastida conceded, he made sure no attempts to reverse the decision were made by the PRI or the government machinery. In so doing, he cut short what could have become an excruciating debate over the results, which would have damaged Mexico's economic stability, the legitimacy of its incoming government and ultimately democratic transition.

On a final note, it is a bitter irony that a book that revisits the euphoria and hope created by Fox's election is published at a moment when public opinion in Mexico is growing alarmingly disillusioned with Fox's actual performance. This reader could not help recalling that, among the crowd showed on television cheering Fox on election evening, once his victory was confirmed, there was a lonely person holding a sign that read: "*¡No nos falles!*" (Don't fail us!). What would that person, and millions of other Mexicans, think of their voting decision four years later? But I guess that is the subject of a different book altogether.

JULIÁN CASTRO-REA *University of Alberta*

The 1999–2000 Elections in Russia: Their Impact and Legacy

Vicki L. Hesli and William M. Reisinger, eds.

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 301

In many respects, the title of this volume understates the importance of its contribution to our understanding of the political dynamics of post-Soviet Russia. By conducting a thorough autopsy of the pivotal 1999 parliamentary and 2000 presidential elections, the contributors to *The 1999–2000 Elections in Russia: Their Impact and Legacy* do indeed say a great deal about the state of Russian electoral politics and political parties at the turn of the century. At the same time, they also provide an excellent overview of the first decade of reform in Russia, through the lens of electoral politics, and make some important conceptual linkages to the broader issues of democratization, institutional reform and public opinion.

The editors have assembled a formidable team of scholars to discuss the important trends that are shaping Russian electoral politics. While it would be extremely difficult to summarize all of their valuable insights and conclusions, there are a number of general themes that can be identified. The first is the overall decline of ideology and the rise of pragmatic, non-ideological parties and leaders, a trend that was epitomized by the success of the Unity Party in the 1999 parliamentary election. In the words of Stephen Hanson, Unity, the hastily assembled political movement that was most closely linked with then prime minister and future President, Vladimir Putin, was "a hodgepodge of pliable state bureaucrats and opportunist regional governors that explicitly organized its campaign around a promise to represent