

The book's own analytical categories are left somewhat underspecified, however. It is not clear how to measure government interest or why it varies over time. Institutional capacity is variously treated as synonymous with bureaucratic competence, technical expertise, interagency coordination, or even utility profitability. Local accountability is similarly used as a catchall term to refer to everything from community ownership to market signals and consumer voice in regulatory forums. These discussions also tend to sidestep the most popular explanation for poor utility performance in the Global South—political capture—and indeed political competition finds surprisingly little place in the analysis. Although the book concludes that clientelism is a side issue (p. 248), this downplays the problem that short-run benefits may undermine long-term sustainability; responsiveness to rural demands can lock energy sectors into financially and environmentally ruinous subsidies. As the authors themselves acknowledge, each of these categories deserves systematic measurement and further study.

These concerns notwithstanding, *Escaping the Energy Poverty Trap* provides a thrilling opening salvo in a nascent field of study. Political scientists, energy scholars, and development practitioners alike will find the book stimulating and provocative, as well as a rich repository of material on successes and failures across three continents. It deserves to kickstart a new wave of comparative politics research on sustainable energy access for all.

Uneven Social Policies: The Politics of Subnational Variation in Latin America. By Sara Niedzwiecki. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2018. 272p. \$99.99 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592719003499

— Natasha Borges Sugiyama, *University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*
sugiyamn@uwm.edu

In *Uneven Social Policies*, Sara Niedzwiecki examines the political factors that influence the effective implementation of novel social policies. In recent decades Latin American countries have broadly expanded social programs, notably in the areas of health and social protection. Two policies—conditional cash transfers (CCTs) and preventive health programs—have been particularly effective for expanding access to benefits to previously marginalized and excluded groups. These highly regarded social policy approaches reflect important advances in many national governments' commitment to inclusion. Their policy features—nondiscretionary, broadly targeted, and noncontributory—are particularly notable for departing from previous social assistance models. For these reasons, Niedzwiecki takes on the crucial task of explaining why implementation of social policy varies within countries and shows how the complexities associated with federalism are at work.

To illustrate the existence of uneven outcomes, Niedzwiecki draws on the country cases of Argentina and Brazil. Both are decentralized and have subnational governments with significant fiscal, policy, and political authority over their own territories. In both countries, the national (federal) government needs subnational governmental cooperation for their CCTs and health policies to work well. The extent to which subnational governments cooperate, and why, is at the heart of this insightful book.

Uneven Social Policies makes important contributions to a growing literature in comparative public policy that examines the politics of expanded social policies in Latin America. The focus here is to uncover the conditions under which national policies are more successfully implemented across subnational units in decentralized countries (p. 2). Notably, the theoretical approach employed in the book broadly integrates scholarship from comparative politics, as well as public policy and public administration. Scholars of US state politics have long noted that federalism can severely complicate national social welfare policy delivery. In the United States, individual states resist national policies because of unfunded mandates, differences in ideology, and partisanship, among other reasons. This book offers many striking parallels with the politics of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Thus, it will be broadly appealing to scholars of federalism, US state politics, Latin America, comparative politics, and social welfare.

Turning to the specifics of the argument, Niedzwiecki argues that subnational implementation of social policies is driven by three general forces. First, there is the issue of political alignments associated with the policy. The author maintains that there are generally two kinds of policies: those that can be easily attributed as belonging to the national government and those for which attribution of responsibility is fuzzier. When policy attribution is clear, the incumbent president and his or her allies can reap electoral dividends from the electorate. In these cases, subnational politicians who are aligned with the president will facilitate implementation of the policy, whereas those who are nonaligned will obstruct policy implementation. Because CCTs provide tangible benefits to families with clear attribution, whereas responsibility for social services tends to be blurred, Niedzwiecki argues that the effect of attribution and political alignment only applies to CCTs.

Her second and third factors—institutional capacity and policy legacies—apply to both CCTs and health policies. Territorial infrastructure, which is part of her second factor, broadly relates to the importance of institutional capacity. Niedzwiecki argues that subnational governments that have stronger territorial infrastructure are better able to implement social policies. She draws on numerous indicators to capture the nuances associated with territorial infrastructure, including the spatial reach of

state institutions and their relationship with nonstate actors (p. 16). She looks at such elements as conditions of facilities; staffing of personnel, such as training, hiring practices, and pay; and civil society collaboration in councils and other participatory venues. The third factor, policy legacies, takes into account previous policies enacted by the subnational jurisdiction. Drawing from Paul Pierson's conceptualization, policy legacies shape politics, create new interest groups, and produce institutional investments that can be hard to dislodge. Niedzwiecki argues that all three factors have an independent effect on policy implementation, and none can override the other (pp. 17–18). The theoretical framework, particularly once applied in the case studies, is thoroughly comprehensive if not entirely parsimonious.

Chapter 3 provides a rationale for her mixed-methods research design and case selection. As is increasingly common among scholars of social policy, Niedzwiecki uses both quantitative analysis and in-depth case studies to tease out causal processes. The quantitative models seek to examine the average effect of political alignments, territorial infrastructure, and policy legacies on social policy implementation; that is, the level of coverage. Whereas the case studies allow her to explain how political alignments, territorial infrastructure, and policy legacies produce varied outcomes in selected provinces and municipalities (p. 64), her multitiered case selection — two municipalities within two states per country — yields a total of eight jurisdictions over several administrations (see table 3.2 on p. 78).

Niedzwiecki tests her theoretical framework in three empirical chapters. Chapter 4 examines the average effects of political alignments, policy legacies, and territorial infrastructure across states in Brazil and provinces in Argentina over time. The effort in building a unique statewide database is notable here. The models provide evidence that political attribution matters for CCTs, with stronger effects for Argentina. As expected, territorial infrastructure also matters. Finally, policy legacies are stronger for Brazil. Yet, readers should interpret the findings with some caution due to structural differences between Brazil and Argentina's delivery of social services and CCTs. In the case of Brazil, municipalities, a third tier of the federal system, have their own authority and role in registering the poor for *Bolsa Família* and administering the health program, *Estratégia Saúde da Família*. Conversely, in Argentina provinces have had a greater role in administering *Plan Nacer*, and provinces and municipalities do not have a legal role in implementing *Asignación Universal por Hijo*. Niedzwiecki acknowledges these administrative and organizational differences in the book. To her credit, the shortcoming of municipal data availability in chapter 4 is precisely what makes her case studies in chapters 5 and 6 so interesting and vital.

Chapters 5 and 6 on CCTs and health care policies, respectively, are really the heart of Niedzwiecki's empir-

ical analysis. The fine-grained analysis draws on 15 months of field research that included 235 interviews with public officials and experts and 148 interviews with social policy recipients, alongside the examination of relevant archival interviews. The inclusion of social policy recipients in the study is particularly impressive in that her analysis gives voice and agency to the recipients themselves. Overall, these chapters provide a vivid portrait of social policy implementation in these municipalities and states or provinces. For instance, Niedzwiecki provides clear and detailed evidence of how subnational competition in the provisioning of CCTs led to the relatively low coverage of *Bolsa Família* within the state of Goiás in Brazil. Similarly, Niedzwiecki provides a clear account for why *Plan Nacer's* policy design avoided the perils associated with negative policy legacies by integrating its services into an existing health infrastructure rather than attempting to build a different one.

Given the meticulously detailed account of municipal-, state-, and federal-level provisioning of CCTs and health programs, it is hard to quibble with omissions. Nevertheless, there are areas for future exploration that are worth noting. To be sure, in both policy arenas we see how indifference on the part of governors and mayors leads to comparative setbacks. But Niedzwiecki also presents a picture of competitive one-upmanship over CCT "generosity." This is not the kind of race-to-the-bottom effect that has been well documented in other federal countries. Taking a positive view, is it possible to engineer a "race to the top" where every layer of the federal system is actively engaged in competitive and collaborative social sector improvements? This is the billion dollar question that awaits future research. Taking a more pessimistic view, does competitive one-upmanship otherwise reflect legacies of subnational clientelism? Perhaps federal and subnational actors are not adopting these programs for similar reasons. Future research is needed to uncover whether nondiscretionary social programs are substantially dislodging some of the most problematic features of Argentina and Brazil's subnational political system, notably the persistence of clientelism, graft, and nondemocratic spaces. *Uneven Social Policies* delivers in providing plenty of food for thought.

Muslim Democratic Parties in the Middle East: Economy and Politics of Islamist Moderation. By A. Kadir Yildirim. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016. 279p. \$85.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592719003396

— Tarek Masoud, *Harvard University*
tarek_masoud@hks.harvard.edu

Much contemporary scholarship in the field of Middle Eastern politics is concerned with understanding why the Arab Spring—that frenetic season of popular revolt that