

JORGE I. DOMÍNGUEZ (ed.): *Technopols: Freeing Politics and Markets in Latin America in the 1990s*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

This book will remain one of the most thorough studies of the individuals involved in the contemporary age of liberalization in Latin America. It is an important contribution to our understanding of the early 1990s, executed with impeccable scholarship, graceful style and balanced elegance. The bulk of the text consists of five uniformly excellent and detailed studies of the intellectual formation and the political interventions of five Latin American leaders. They are "technopols," that is, highly trained individuals—four of the five are economists—who go beyond being mere technocrats by merit of their vigorous and adroit participation in political life. Indeed, what makes a technopol is his or her acceptance of the need to legitimize their agendas through political participation. The technopol does not disdain the "inefficiencies" of politics, on the contrary, the technopol has understood the eventual inefficiency and limitations of technocrats and technocracy. Technopols understand the need to make good economics (or necessary economics) politically viable and sustainable, and "have fashioned economic policies guided by their political analysis of the circumstances of their respective countries...". Thus, they "design economic policies by understanding politics first." We are tempted to think of them as a second generation of neoliberals, who have learned from the failures and disasters of the early neoliberal radicals.

Among the guiding principles that organize the book is the claim—well substantiated by the book itself—that "leaders make a difference." That is, that the personal strategies and tactics of the leaders which guided Latin America through the perils of liberalization are fundamental determinants of, and explanations for, their success. Even, in one case, of their failure!

The five leaders studied are Domingo Cavallo, Argentine Minister of Economy; Pedro Aspe, Minister of Finance in Mexico; Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of Brazil; Evelyn Matthei, Chilean Deputy; and Alejandro Foxley, Minister of Finance in Chile. Each of the studies is based on extensive interviews and, in some cases, archival research. They all build upon the relevant literature, primarily from political science. Each of the studies leaves one with much greater understanding, respect and sympathy for the five chosen leaders. Yet we also note the conspicuous absence of Carlos Salinas de Gortari. We are reminded of Bob Sobel's quixotic and difficult admonition, in his book *The Worldly Economists*, that "proximity can lead to new insights...[but]...it can also transform a search for understanding into a conclusion for advocacy...". Our sense is that there may not be much new in

what Max Corden called "Machiavellian economics." The insight that politics matters is important, but not new. What was novel was the hubris that politics would not matter.

This book will become required reading for all who seek to understand the intricacies of contemporary Latin American political economy. It is suitable for use as a core text in advanced and intermediate level courses.

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KATHLEEN BRUHN: *Taking on Goliath*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Este es, en efecto, un trabajo pionero sobre el Partido de la Revolución Democrática en México, cuyo valor, sin embargo, fue dejado atrás por la realidad. Sin duda, si la autora escribiera ahora, llegaría a conclusiones muy distintas, especialmente en lo que toca a su visión más bien sombría sobre las posibilidades políticas del PRD, que no solamente ha ganado la gobernación del Distrito Federal, sino que se ha convertido en la segunda fuerza en la Cámara de Diputados.

El gran mérito del libro reside en su correcta descripción del proceso que llevó a la escisión más importante en el PRI, que da lugar al PRD, y a los eventos que llevan a la consolidación del PRD. Sin embargo, el análisis está sesgado, ya que se concentra solamente en Michoacán y el Estado de México, tal vez porque la autora trató de seguirle muy de cerca las huellas a Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas. La suposición de que el Frente Democrático Nacional se fundó para crear un partido político, y que la llevó a sostener parte de sus análisis sobre los problemas de la fundación del PRD, es errónea. La confluencia de fuerzas que dio lugar a un frente político fue en parte programática y en parte oportunista, porque había fuerzas como el Partido del Frente Cardenista de Reconstrucción Nacional. Este utilizó acertada y oportunistamente la bandera cardenista para registrar un crecimiento artificial que le permitió sobrevivir unos años más antes de caer a su verdadero nivel, que es prácticamente nulo.

Este tipo de error analítico parece coincidir con un cierto desconocimiento de las sutilezas de la política mexicana, por ejemplo, cuando la autora considera que el ser presidente municipal de la capital de un Estado (Morelia) es una "posición básicamente administrativa" (p. 191). Y es que Bruhn fue incapaz de liberarse de sus valores y dejar de comparar el sistema político de México con el de Estados Unidos, tal y como lo hace una buena cantidad de