

En resumen, *Génesis del Porvenir* es un libro esencial no sólo para los investigadores del estado de Querétaro, sino también para todo aquel que se dedique a la historia regional y nacional de la época.

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JONATHAN HARTLYN: *The Struggle For Democratic Politics In The Dominican Republic*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

The book is informative and theoretically rich in its explanations of the struggle for democracy in the Dominican Republic. It is both a political history of the Dominican Republic and, more broadly, a book about democratisation. In particular, it discusses the impact of neopatrimonialism: a system of rule in which "the centralisation of power in the hands of the ruler who seeks to reduce the autonomy of his followers by generating ties of loyalty and dependence" often results in a "blurring of public and private interests and purposes within the administration" (p.14), which has worked against the consolidation of democracy in the Dominican Republic. However, Hartlyn's approach argues against seeking uni-causal factors, in contrast to previous works which have either focused on structural features of US imperialism or cultural factors stemming from a Spanish colonial legacy and the impact of personalistic rulers such as Trujillo and Balaguer. Rather than viewing these factors as determining the processes and prospects for democratic consolidation in the Dominican Republic, the author adopts a historical path-dependent approach to democratisation, in which the historical legacy influences and interacts with political-institutional factors. Thus Hartlyn engages in the debate about structure and agency attempting to bring a more nuanced understanding to the processes of democratic transition and consolidation in the Dominican Republic. Overall, the book does this well.

Hartlyn attempts to explain why the Dominican Republic has failed to transform political practices away from neopatrimonialism during three distinct periods: 1961-1978, following the death of Trujillo; 1978-1986 and the "missed opportunities" for democratic politics under the PRD governments of Antonio Guzmán and Jorge Blanco; and 1986-1996, when neopatrimonial democracy re-emerged under Balaguer in spite of societal change and economic constraints. Finally, what appears to be a new transition in 1996 is examined in relation to previous ones using a general framework built around three broad clusters of factors. Employing an analytical framework based on

previous comparative literature on democratic transitions, the likelihood of a successful democratic transition is examined in terms of "the nature of the pre-existing authoritarian regime and its relations to key actors; the international geopolitical and economic context; and the transition process, which includes the interaction of the mode of transition with the continuing influence of the previous two sets of factors" (p.61), and brings a more optimistic outlook for institutionalising democracy in the Dominican Republic in the future.

The importance of institutions is projected through the book's "level of analysis": the "middle level" of political institutions, parties, policymaking and elections, and how they are mediated through neopatrimonialism. Whilst recognising that there are informal institutions such as clientelism which may be of importance in the Dominican Republic, the book is lacking in any systematic treatment of how these work across and within civil society. Democratic consolidation is primarily seen in terms of democratic politicians, political parties and elections. The failure to focus on civil society in the struggle for democratic politics in the Dominican Republic limits our understanding of the processes of democratic consolidation and the important role that social participation plays in reaching consolidation. Although Hartlyn acknowledges this, he pays attention to it only in the concluding chapter, and I would have personally liked to have seen this incorporated into his analytical framework. Civil society is generally weak under neopatrimonial leaders, and Hartlyn is quite right to state that popular forces have been too fragmented and organisationally weak to mount and sustain a challenge against the state. However, the emergence of Neighbourhood Councils as autonomous forms of representation and means of participation throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with some successes at the level of city government, require us to look beyond the "middle level" employed in this book.

In more general terms, the book is well written and welcome for the way in which it deals with the complex nature of Dominican political history, and will provide a useful tool in understanding both Dominican politics and the importance that political-institutional factors have on regime transitions. Furthermore, a historical path-dependent analysis highlights the need to overcome either purely structural or cultural accounts of the difficulties encountered by the Dominican Republic and its people in their struggle towards democracy.

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