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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 'Progresa' with its emphasis on strictly monitored conditions, and Brazil's 'Bolsa Família' with looser conditions. He argues that Progresa 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 difussion heavily influenced by ideology. The term 'policy difussion' 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 difussion is used to decribe 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 Progresa model diffused vertically (from IFIs to countries) whereas the Bolsa Família 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 Progresa 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 Progresa 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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