when using such treatments, providers tend to attribute properties (e.g., development of trust) whose efficacy is not intrinsic to the intervention itself.

The book has been published during a critical period for the medical field, which is constantly scrutinized about the cost-effectiveness of its approaches. Although the authors do not clearly promote a reduction of medical care, they give credence to the financial considerations intrinsic in the implementation of evidence-based practices and managed care. However, their main focus appears to be on the value of the public health approach in addressing unhealthy habits (i.e. smoking, bad diet) and providing non-medical solutions based on preventative strategies. In stressing their view, the authors cite the work of three medical sociologists: Thomas McKeown and John McKinley and Sonja McKinley, who have clearly shown that the decline in mortality for some of the most lethal infectious disorders (i.e. diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis) occurred long before the implementation of prophylactic vaccination, and was mainly related to improvements in social and sanitary conditions. During the last quarter of the twentieth century, many other medical sociologists also have emphasized the same theme.

The authors tend to neglect the fact that the purpose of medicine is not just to improve morbidity and mortality rates, but also to provide relief from discomfort, physical and emotional pain, and to improve the quality of life, even for those individuals whose lives are about to end. For example, consider the case of hospice services provided for terminally-ill cancer patients, which certainly do not improve survival rates, but they allow numerous terminally-ill patients to leave this life with some peace and dignity. The authors doubtless know about this aspect of medical care and its inclusion in the narrative would have conveyed a more complete picture concerning the significance of medical interventions.

In the concluding chapter, the authors raise the question of what would fill the gap caused by the disappearance of the medical field. They speculate that the gap would be filled by an expansion of other professions (e.g., priests taking care of mental illness). We believe this is a pivotal question, which could have been addressed more extensively. The question could have provided an opportunity to theorize about a health care system based on a more consistent and congruent collaboration between the public health specialist and the health care provider, which would promote life-style changes while remaining connected to the social reality of the individual patient.

Overall the book represents a comprehensive contribution to understanding the effectiveness of medical interventions. The book may prove helpful for health care providers, health care administrators, public health specialists, and others interested in gaining knowledge about the complexity and contradictions of the medical field. Although the authors’ analysis reflects established thinking in the public health field, its comprehensiveness provides an analytical landscape not readily available in the existing literature.


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The smallest country in Latin America, El Salvador has a big history when it comes to the study of contentious politics. Many readers will have some acquaintance with the Salvadoran wave of protest that preceded the civil war of the 1980s, but many fewer know of the country’s earlier waves and those that have followed. Given its number of protest waves across a broad span of time—and that those of the late 1920s to early 1930s and the late 1970s to 1980s were among the most significant for all of twentieth century Latin America—El Salvador provides an excellent opportunity for the longitudinal study of social movements in the global South. Paul Almeida has used this opportunity well, pro-
The political process model certainly has room within it for alternative explanations to liberalization but little attention was given to what Almeida calls “regime intimidation-induced mobilization” until the last decade when scholarship looked more to contention outside of institutionalized democracies. Intimidation through erosion of basic rights and escalating state repression (as well as state-attributed economic problems) can also promote mobilization. Importantly, Almeida also associates intimidation with the form of collective action, which “will likely become more radicalized and violent only when combined with . . . repressive threats” (p. 23). Almeida is particularly good at showing the role of “organizational holdovers” from a liberalizing period as agents of continuing—and radicalizing—mobilization when the regime turns more repressive. For example, he summons impressive empirical evidence for prior organizing activity and state repression in explaining which municipalities participated in the leftist-indigenous uprising of 1932 (which was then followed by the notorious La Matanza (The Massacre), which left 10,000 to 30,000 dead (pp. 46–53). He is similarly good at the interplay among these variables in the growing mobilization in the late 1970s and into 1980 under increasingly repressive conditions.

Almeida’s third type of mobilization is what he calls “globalization-induced protest.” Here my reaction is more mixed. He formulates this type of environment to understand contemporary Salvadoran protest, notably the campaign of 2002–2003 against health care privatization. His account of this protest wave is informative and interesting. However, it strikes me that the variables of the conventional political process model serve quite well to explain this contention, that is, the interplay between grievances, opportunity, and threat. His argument that contemporary economic grievances based on state austerity policies in El Salvador (and throughout the global South) are
best understood as “connected to global integration” (p. 176) seems to me to require more support than provided and perhaps is not as clear cut as purported.

In conclusion, Almeida’s study should be of interest to many readers beyond area specialists. Because Almeida’s case of El Salvador is such a great one for the study of social movements and contentious politics and because his account is so good, Waves of Protest should be of interest to anyone seeking to better understand popular movements struggling under difficult circumstances to win a more decent life for themselves and others.


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The transformation of socialist economies in Eastern Europe to the dynamics of market economies is frequently construed in economic theory to be a matter of self-regulation occurring in conditions of separation from social behavior and motivation. Nina Bandelj’s study of the role of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in these transitional economies uses a social constructivist approach, particularly the idea of economic embeddedness, to demonstrate that decisions regarding foreign economic involvement are rooted not in rational economic decision-making but rather social structures, culture, and power. This is particularly interesting not just for the sake of theory-testing but due to research that shows FDI has not provided frequently expected economic growth and equality for postsocialist countries. Moreover, her study raises serious questions about the form and impact of social structures that typify the FDI process.

Seeing FDI as “a relational, socially constituted process” (p. 23) Bandelj lays aside the concept of economic efficiency as a rationale for FDI placement. She argues that first socialism, and later capitalism, employed socially constructed value orientations that shaped the economic system, not the other way around. The foundation necessary for FDI—privatization—“implies moral issues concerning rightful beneficiaries and is entangled in the web of political relations.” (p. 50). Case studies especially from postsocialist states, particularly Slovenia and Poland, are employed to demonstrate the “cultural embeddedness” of the FDI process; thus, problems of cultural understanding and political concerns are given attention, not exclusively economic factors such as GDP growth or cost-benefit analyses. To Bandelj, FDI decisions are not only about economic issues but rather the institutionalization and legitimation of the FDI process itself (pp. 68–70). This form of path dependency, she argues, results in an incremental and system-replicating approach. Drawing conclusions about the FDI process under such considerations is more difficult, however, because as Bandelj finds “there is no general pattern” of adopting and legitimizing FDI regardless of the post-socialist system being considered (p. 87). While this may be true in part, Bandelj offers only the issue of using FDI-generated revenues “to patch budget deficits” as evidence of distinct governmental macro-economic actions and largely ignores the implications of restructuring economies as a rationale for opening up these systems to foreigners. Unfortunately she avoids providing insights gained from numerous interviews she conducted with postsocialist officials about the specifics of privatization strategies. A brief discussion of “how postsocialist states create markets” (pp. 99–101) does not clarify the decision-making strategies that have occupied numerous fiscal and economic planning ministries and agencies.

Support for Bandelj’s social-constructivist model is found in the determination of cross-country patterns of FDI flows, especially how states may choose partners so as to generate investments. The case study of Slovan (Chapter Five) and its efforts to attract foreign investors convincingly illustrates social-constructivist theory from the perspective of postsocialist decision-makers (political elites, middle management, and workers alike in this particular situation). This brief, readable account of how power relationships