

Crafting Policies to End Poverty in Latin America: The Quiet Transformation

Ana Lorena De La O

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This book provides a theory and evidence to explain the initial decision of governments to adopt a conditional cash transfer program (the most prominent type of antipoverty program currently in operation in Latin America), and whether such programs are insulated from political manipulations or not. Ana Lorena De La O shows that whether presidents limit their own discretion or not has consequences for the survival of policies, their manipulation, and how effective they are in improving the lives of the poor. This book is the first of its kind to present evidence from all Latin American CCTs.

"Smart, crisp, and well focused, this book explains why Latin American governments adopted conditional cash transfer programs and assesses the varying outcomes of these programs in reducing poverty and containing clientelism. De La O admirably combines the comparative analyses of these policies with insightful studies of the behavior of both voters and presidents." Jorge I. Domnguez, Harvard University, Massachusetts"Conditional cash transfers (CCTs) have spread across the developing world and put billions of dollars into the hands of some of the world's poorest people. Yet despite reams of careful economic research on the impact of CCTs ... we have had very little research on the politics that underpin this revolution in social policy - on why, for instance, access to CCTs is highly politicized in some places and free of political machinations in others. It is into this lacunae that this manuscript steps. And while there are always advantages to being the first to cover a big, important topic, De La O has done much better than beat the crowds that are certain to follow in her footsteps. This book is a broad, insightful, empirically rich, systematic treatment of the single biggest innovation in social policy across the world over the last several decades. It is truly an agenda-setting book for anyone interested in social policy, redistribution, poverty, or the politics of the poor." Erik Wibbels, Duke University, North Carolina"This book addresses one of the most significant transformations in the political economy of developing nations in recent years. De La O's comprehensive analysis of the adoption and consequences of conditional cash transfers in Latin America represents an important and innovative contribution to the theoretical and empirical literatures on social policy, redistribution, institutional design, and development. By highlighting the importance of domestic politics, moreover, this book provides an important contribution to a literature often dominated by international and macroeconomic perspectives. *Crafting Policies to End Poverty in Latin America* will be of great interest not only to scholars of Latin American politics, but also to students of development policy throughout the world." Sarah M. Brooks, Ohio State University

About the Author Ana Lorena De La O is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Yale University, where she is affiliated with the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, the Institution for Social and Policy Studies, and the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs. Her research relates to the political economy of poverty alleviation, clientelism, and the provision of public goods. Her work has appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, the *Journal of Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, the *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, and the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. She earned her PhD in Political Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2007.