

Kirtz, Mary K., Editor; Mark J. Kasoff, Rick Farmer, and John C. Green. *The Elections of 2000: Politics, Culture, and Economics of North America*. (Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 2006), pp. 292. \$19.95. ISBN 1-931968-30-6 pb

The editors correctly identify the need for a more integrated political analysis of the emerging North American economy. Canada, Mexico and the United States are moving towards a more integrated relationship at the economic level, somewhat at the cultural and linguistic levels but not at the political level. In fact, political integration is not on the horizon. The electoral process is a first indicator of a maturing democratic process which in turn can lead to subsequent political cooperation. That cooperation is made possible by electoral shifts.

Implied in 2000 elections is that as Mexico moves toward a greater degree of democratization and modernization it can more fully partner with the US and Canada. In other words, since the PRI leadership could not bring itself to cooperate to any greater degree; it would take the newly elected President Fox and his more neo-conservative economic policies to trigger a deeper economic cooperation with the rest of North America. The authors correctly identify cultural trends, economic indicators, and electoral events that shape the fledging triumvirate.

The rest of the continent should have been included. The authors tended to ignore the Caribbean islands and the rest of North America, except in the very useful last chapter that takes a snapshot of elections in four Central American countries. The book does not synthesize its many analytical chapters very well and ends abruptly. I was left hungry

for more synthesis. How can elections lead to more cooperation? Can interest groups move towards being more transnational? Will we see the Mexican, North American and Canadian middle classes find common ground? The book would have been perfect with a final chapter exploring the next steps towards integration.

The book needed to be published given the obvious globalization and regional developments. However, history never ceases its march forward and possibly may have left the text behind. The analysis of the 2000 elections is good in and of itself, yet recent events involving the 2006 elections in Mexico, the growing importance of immigration, and border disputes may cast doubt on the long run usefulness of the text. The authors work hard to cover a wide range of topics such as media coverage, voter apathy, immigration issues and especially valuable material dealing with multi-cultural issues from all three perspectives. The text is especially useful for the Latin American scholar but most undergraduates would complain if assigned this to read. The book provides a wealth of data and may serve as a valuable reference in the scholar's library.

J. Tony Litherland
Oklahoma Baptist University