to avoid the difficulties of metaphysics, nor can “horizontal” thinking generate the kind of moral progress Rorty sought. The answer lies in understanding just how real our relationships with others really are. They are more than products of discourse, although they are this too. Unfortunately the book doesn’t do much more than hint at the outlines of this alternative approach.

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Why Dominant Parties Lose, Mexico’s Democratization in Comparative Perspective
Kenneth F. Greene
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Why Dominant Parties Lose is a well crafted book that contributes significantly to the literature on Mexican politics, party systems, political transition and comparative political regimes. It attempts to answer the following questions: Why have dominant parties persisted in power for decades in countries spread across the globe? And why did most eventually lose? By the author’s calculation, “16 countries on four continents had dominant parties during the twentieth century and, by century’s end, 11 had transformed into fully competitive democracies with turnover” (297). In Mexico, the PRI (and its predecessors) won every presidential election from 1929 to 2000 and controlled Congress until 1997. How could such a dominant party be defeated?

Greene defines dominant party systems as “hybrids that combine meaningful electoral competition with continuous executive and legislative rule by a single party for at least 20 years or at least four consecutive elections” (12). The main feature of dominant party systems is that “elections are meaningful but manifestly unfair” (12). He develops a sophisticated theory of single-party dominance and opposition party development that features formal modelling, quantitative analysis, and qualitative fieldwork. A chapter is devoted to testing his ambitious theory on other cases in authoritarian (Malaysia, Taiwan) and, interestingly, in democratic (Japan and Italy) environments as well.

Greene’s theory focuses on “incumbency advantages” (essentially privileged access to public resources), rather than focusing on what he calls “demand-side theories” (focusing on social cleavages, voter dealignment, or economic explanations), institutional approaches (electoral rules and barriers to entry), or supply-side approaches (is it rational to form opposition parties?) (see ch. 1). His work supports the view that liberalization led to democratization in Mexico, though not for the noble reason that promoters of liberal reforms were also democratizers. His main argument is that “challenger party competitiveness is primarily determined by two types of dominant party advantages: the incumbent’s resource advantages and its ability to raise the costs of participation in the opposition” (169). In such an environment, the opposition has virtually no chance to win, which will discourage the average political actors but not the “ideologically” oriented candidates and activists. These activists end up “creating niche parties that make specialized appeals to minority electoral constituencies,” rather than catch-all parties favoured by most voters (5). In other words, dominant parties win elections before election day “by forcing opposition parties, if they form, to compete with policy appeals that are extremist relative to the preference of the average voter” (33). Greene does not ignore factors, such as repression of opposition and electoral fraud, which immediately come to mind when thinking about 70 years of PRI rule. Rather, he inserts them in his model as cost-raising factors for the opposition, which contribute to producing what really
matters: the moderate-minded and down-to-earth actors shunning thankless elec
toral politics, leaving the field to risk-taking “ideological” actors. Here Greene con-
flates political attitudes and positions, a problem if you make the theory travel: in
Iran conservatives (programmatically) are radicals (in attitudes); in China Commu-
nists (programmatically) are conservatives (in attitudes); in Eastern Europe (and in
eighteenth-century Europe) Liberals were radicals, and so on. At any rate, accord-
ing to Greene, “only when the incumbent’s advantages diminish can challengers attract
the more moderate personnel that may transform niche challengers into electorally
competitive catchall parties” (6). In the case of Mexico, this happened as a result of
the neo-liberal reforms (essentially, the privatizations) launched by the last three

The weaknesses of this book rest closely to the strengths. First, if it features a
fine application of the latest comparative politics and party system literature pro-
duced in the US, it draws very little on the scholarship and publications produced in
Mexico. Second, perhaps inevitably, Greene’s tight theoretical model is impervious
to variables that don’t fit in. For instance, if opposition parties in Mexico became
“increasingly centrist” during the past 25 years, it may be in part due to external
trends. For instance, the left is by and large more centrist today than thirty years ago,
but that’s true everywhere, not just in Mexico, so it may not be caused only or pri-
marily by patronage-eroding privatizations. One is also tempted to kick the tires of
his decision-theoretic model of party affiliation. He identifies two possible benefits
to participating in electoral activities: instrumental benefits (winning the elections)
or expressive benefits (an opportunity to express dissent, even in a losing cause). For
him, moderate are typically receptive to the first, and ideologues to the latter. Not
enough attention is paid to the instrumental benefit for the opposition resulting from
victory in legislative (federal and the states), state (governorships) and municipal elec-
tions. The PRI/Mexican state nurtured its legal opposition relatively well. Instrumental
benefits of some sort are arguably important in convincing opposition parties to
continue playing the loser’s role in dominant party systems.

In sum, this is a great book, featuring an extensive review of the vast literature
in the field, great mastery of the theoretical and methodological tools available in
the discipline, a carefully argued case for the author’s significant contribution, all of
which delivered in self-possessed and dispassionate prose.

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Auteurs et textes classiques de la théorie des organisations
Laurent Bélanger et Jean Mercier
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Si les auteurs classiques des théories des organisations sont bien connus de nom, il
n’est pas rare, néanmoins, que leurs textes s’empoussèrent sur les rayons de biblio-
thèque. Il faut dire que le champ est vaste et que nombre des écrits qui le composent,
à défaut d’être mis en contexte convenablement, prennent les habits de l’archaïsme
lorsque rapprochés des plus récentes modes managériales. Pourtant, la lecture des
écrits fondateurs des théories des organisations revêt une valeur heuristique indéni-
able. Pour faire contrepoids aux multiples synthèses qui en sont faites chaque année,
un recueil de textes classiques, comme celui que proposent Bélanger et Mercier, est
appreciable et trouve sa pleine justification en regard des anthologies qui embrassent
le même projet.

Le premier attrait du recueil provient de la sélection des textes qui y sont
présentés. D’abord, l’ouvrage expose des écrits de Gouldner, Mayo, Burns et Stalker,