

**Alberto José Frick Cardelle. 2003. *Health Care Reform in Central America: NGO-Government Collaboration in Guatemala and El Salvador*. Coral Gables, FL: North-South Center Press. Appendices, references, index. 200 pages. \$43.00 hard cover.**

Reform is probably the most frequently used term in the literature of health care system. From a macroeconomic perspective, reform policies are viewed as short-term austerities that lead to long-term growth and development. These inter-temporal trade-offs, however, are not always acceptable in health sector. Enduring present pain for future gain is not acceptable because present suffering cannot be offset by future improvement.

The economic difficulties that faced many developing countries during the past two decades led to a fundamental re-examination of development strategies. Reform implies change and policy often requires difficult changes in stakeholder coalitions, shifts in the structures and rules of implementing agencies, and new patterns of interaction. The book's major theme, therefore, is the collaborative efforts between the state and NGOs in the delivery of health care services. This has been brought about by two emerging forces: the shift from state-centered development to a market-based development model and the transition toward more democratic electoral regimes. This has meant redefining the existing adversarial relationship between the NGO and the state within the health care system.

The book focuses on two countries in Central America, Guatemala and El Salvador, based on the "most similar" criteria (8). Both countries have had a political and social landscape dominated by violence. Cardelle examines state-NGO collaboration in the context of transition which began in the 1990s. The cases demonstrate how the implementation of neo-liberal economic reforms and market-based strategies in the social sector led to new forms of relationships.

Structurally, this book can be viewed as consisting of four basic parts. The first part, covering chapters 1 and 2, attempts to give the reader a summary of the book and the evolution of NGO-government relation. Chapter 1 includes an explanation of data collection which involved interviews of key informants. The author's aim is to identify indicators that can be used to measure how NGO rapprochement with the state affects organizational program strategies that he refers to as "organizational technology." The second part, chapter 3, discusses the structural adjustment program and the role of two important international agencies—the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund—and their involvement with the Third World countries in fostering the

reform process and national economic growth after taking over from USAID. This discussion is supplemented by individual country experience, democratization and peace accords, and the health sector reform.

The third part is provided again by a single chapter, chapter 4, that constitutes the core of the book. In this chapter the author attempts to give the reader a theoretical explanation of the emerging relationship between the NGO and the state and how the shift from state-centered development to a market-based development and the transition toward more democratic electoral regimes has impacted the relationship. According to the author, El Salvador's NGOs have undergone a greater transformation compared to Guatemala's. This is because El Salvador has advanced more along the post-peace accord path of reconciliation than Guatemala.

In the fourth and final part of the book, chapters 5 and 6, the author distills his final observations, conclusions, and reservations about NGO-government collaboration. Chapter 5 examines the antecedent of reform and collaboration and the author explains that the fragmentation and marginalization that characterize the NGO sector in Central America are a result of the corporatist, clientelistic, and authoritarian environment within which they evolved and function. This chapter seems to be misplaced as it should have been put before Chapter 4. Chapter 6 gives the future scenarios for NGO-state relations, applying the scenarios to each case study.

While Cardelle's book holds no big surprises, it supplies a wealth of references that concisely cover many of the relevant topics and issues of health sector; the bibliography alone covers eighteen pages. Thus, Cardelle's book can easily serve as a reference for research in the area of health care in "economies in transition" and developing economies of the Third World. Details of the NGOs in terms of their management, size, and the specific services they provide are lacking in this volume. Comparison with United States health system toward the end of the book seems far fetched given the level of development of the two Central American countries.

The central credo the author puts forward in this small volume is that future emergence of collaboration will require a state that is more efficient, a private sector that is more caring, and an NGO sector that is more accountable. In this regard, the book will be of interest for scholars in the field of public services, government studies, and adjacent branches of economics and political science.

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**Randall Kennedy. 2002. *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*. New York: Pantheon Publishing. 226 pages. Index. \$22.00 hard cover.**

Randall Kennedy, the author of this work, is an African-American professor at the Harvard School of Law. This work is segmented into four sections. The first section discusses the origin and definition of the word “nigger” in a historical context and the contemporary uses of the word. In this section, Kennedy guides the reader through the genesis of the word and attempts to show that it was deliberately created to humiliate, belittle, and defame blacks. Kennedy provides various examples of how this word has been used throughout American history.

At the beginning of chapter one, Kennedy asks several thought provoking questions to engage the reader. He asks, how should “nigger” be defined? Is it a part of the American cultural inheritance that warrants preservation? Why does “nigger” generate such powerful reactions? Is it a more hurtful epithet than insults such as kike, wop, wetback, mick, chink, and gook? Should blacks be able to use “nigger” in ways forbidden to others? Should the law view “nigger” as a provocation that reduces the culpability of a person who responds violently? Should people be fired from their jobs for saying “nigger”? In this chapter, Kennedy shows how “nigger” has been used by politicians as well and cites South Carolina Senator Benjamin Tillman, Georgia Governor Eugene Talmadge, Supreme Court Justice James Clark McReynolds, President Harry S. Truman, and President Lyndon B. Johnson to name but a few.

In chapter two, Kennedy takes aim at the use of “nigger” in the judicial system of America. He provides an interesting discourse of its use as a fighting word and as a viable defense against murder. Kennedy’s indelible intellect of law is illuminated in this chapter. In this chapter, he concludes that judges will continue to face conflict over this word because it remains a word that summons up powerful emotions in the American jurisprudence of epithets.

Chapter three begins with a discussion on the Southern custom of derogatorily calling blacks “niggers.” Again, Kennedy does a masterful job in laying out a framework that reveals how the word has been used over time. He uses literature and real instances to show how the stigmatization of nigger has created an atmosphere in which people have used the word to inflame emotions, make false charges, and exploit feelings of guilt and anger from society. He provides the Tawanna Brawley case in New York as an example. By the mere suggestion of the title for chapter three, “The Pitfalls in Fighting Nigger,” Kennedy seems to be suggesting that it is okay for everyone to say

nigger because it is just a word and that in due time, if “nigger” loses its negative connotation, it will be an acceptable word to be used by all.

The concluding chapter attempts to monitor how society is doing with the use of “nigger.” He asserts that the word continues to cause social eruptions and deeply rankles many people in American society, but he also suggests that if the word is more widely disseminated, then the stigma can be removed by taking the power associated with the word away from those who use it as an insult. He suggests that this process has already begun.

I am not convinced that the meaning of the word has changed or will change in the future. Kennedy’s case may have been made stronger if he had taken more time to explore the contemporary use and spelling of the word “nigga” made famous by the musical rap group NWA and that has become widely accepted by the hip-hop generation. Another limitation I find in his argument is his omission of gender as an issue in regard to the use of the word. If the contemporary use of the word has been crafted to mean “fearless, strong, and tough,” does it mean the same when females use the word in reference to other women?

The book is a short read of only about 200 pages, but it is full of insight. This work is powerful and Kennedy has boldly treaded where many African-American intellectuals have not dared to go. He provides a solid discussion throughout the text backed up by factual accounts and real cases. Although I disagreed with the main thesis of the book, “that the word can be transformed,” this book can certainly be used a supplemental text in Race and Law, Civil Rights, and African-American Politics classes. Rest assured, this book will generate spirited class discussions.

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**Carlos A. Manfroni. 2003. *The Inter-American Convention Against Corruption: Annotated with Commentary*. Updated by Richard S. Werksman. Translated by Michael Ford. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books. 180 pages. \$60.00 cloth.**

In March, 1996, The Inter-American Convention against Corruption (ICAC) was adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) membership to provide hemispheric-wide governmental efforts to battle corruption. Certainly the formulation of a consensual contract to establish “a network of international solidarity” (107) to combat corruption is, in and of itself, a notable achievement. The strength of this book is in the authors’ ability to provide a contextual description of the struggle to find agreement, noting membership conflicts and resultant compromises, as well as offering the limitations of the ICAC and future challenges facing the OAS member states as they attempt to monitor the implementation of the convention.

The ICAC document is less than 3,600 words and comprises only twelve pages of the book (Appendix A). It is the introductory chapter, justifying the need for an anti-corruption convention, and subsequent section-by-section analysis of the document, that inform the reader as to how the membership managed to address cultural diversity in legal systems across the Americas and reach agreement. As the author identifies the OAS member states that introduced clauses, supported and opposed original wording, and offered rationales for the inclusion and exclusion of specific elements in the document arising in their debates, the reader is granted insight into the intrinsic political dynamics of formulating international public policy.

The author was an active participant in the creation of the convention and was, therefore, privy to essential antecedent issues OAS member states brought to the table that directed the creation of each clause. Manfroni discusses the difficulties in selecting language that captured the intent of the membership to apply broad-based resources in a consistent manner to combat corruption while, at the same time, balancing the need not to be excessively restrictive or allow legal loopholes that would make the convention unenforceable. For instance, he relates that in Article I, the challenge was to find a definition of “public official” that adequately captured a broad classification of persons with powers that might make them subject to bribery, including those in temporary or honorary positions as well as those who have yet to “officially” assume office.

The work emphasizes the significance of ground-breaking proclamations to actively prosecute crimes of corruption (Article V) and cooperate in establishing international legislation to classify crimes of corruption (Article VII, VIII and IX), allow extradition (Article XIII), and promote mutual assistance to facilitate successful prevention and prosecution efforts (Article XIV, XV and XVI).

Following the detailed analysis of each section of the convention, the book includes an appendix (Appendix B) that speaks to the efforts of the Working Group on Probity and Public Ethics to pursue the intent of the convention by creating strategies that cultivate cooperative activities, conducting research and formulating model laws and codes of conduct, as well as expanding participation to other countries and non-governmental organizations. This updated volume contributes the subsequent appendices that present efforts to create and implement a follow-up mechanism to evaluation the progress of the convention (Appendices C-F).

To date, 33 countries have ratified the ICAC and the Committee of Experts designated to monitor implementation are conducting reviews of implementation plans by member states through 2005-2006. Therefore, the convention is just the beginning of a long and challenging journey to cultivate ethical practices and prosecute corruption in international governmental activities.

*The Inter-American Convention Against Corruption* would be an enjoyable read for public policy educators and students interested specifically in the work of the OAS and generally in a case study analysis of policy formulation at an international level. Although the book surrounds the creation of a specific legal tool to confront illegal activities, it is the wrangling for consensus in a document that promotes consistent interpretation and application of policy, while navigating political interests of the parties involved, that gives the reader an appreciation for the demanding complexities of acquiring an international commitment to combat a world-wide problem.

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