

[Wealth, health, and democracy in East Asia and Latin America \(/review/10.5860/CHOICE.48-0397\)](/review/10.5860/CHOICE.48-0397)

[McGuire, James W. \(/search?exactauthor=McGuire, James W\)](/search?exactauthor=McGuire, James W), Cambridge, 2010

406p, 9780521515467 \$85.00, 9780521139342 \$27.99

LC Call Number: [HB \(/search?lcstart=HB\)](/search?lcstart=HB)1323



The broad theoretical framework for McGuire's interesting and significant work is the capabilities approach to development as found in works such as *Development as Freedom* (CH, Feb'00, 37-3451), by the Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen. McGuire (Wesleyan Univ.) focuses on the health component of human development, which he measures with infant mortality. His goal is to empirically understand the relationship between infant mortality on the one hand, and GDP per capita and the public provision of social services on the other hand. Some of his results are reminiscent of Peter Lindert's comparative quantitative history of social spending, *Growing Public* (2 v., CH, Sep'04, 42-0421), in that he too finds democracy to have a positive effect on social spending. McGuire's major contribution is the combination of quantitative analysis with a detailed qualitative investigation of the institutional framework of eight countries in Latin America and East Asia. This enables him to explain anomalies, such as the Chilean case, in which an authoritarian government during a period of declining GDP presided over a dramatic drop in infant mortality (1973-84). This book deserves to be widely circulated among development specialists and is a powerful antidote to narrow theoretical approaches.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduate through professional readership.

Reviewer: [J. Gerber \(/search?reviewer=J. Gerber\)](/search?reviewer=J. Gerber), San Diego State University

Recommendation: Highly recommended

Readership Level: Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty, Two-

Year Technical Program Students, Professionals/Practitioners

Interdisciplinary Subjects: [Asian and Asian American Studies \(/search?q=&ints\[\]=asa\)](/search?q=&ints[]=asa), [Latin American & Latina/o Studies \(/search?q=&ints\[\]=lt\)](/search?q=&ints[]=lt)

Subject: [Social & Behavioral Sciences - Economics \(/search?q=&sbj\[\]=ecn\)](/search?q=&sbj[]=ecn)

Choice Issue: sep 2010 vol. 48 no. 1

Choice Review #: 48-0397

Review DOI: 10.5860/CHOICE.48-0397