

## **BEST BOOK AWARD 2009**

The Best Book Award committee consisting of Pamela Paxton, Greta Krippner, Javier Auyero, Frederick Solt and Denis O'Hearn received 24 entries and 5 books were identified as finalists. Of the submissions, the committee decided to award the prize to Brian Steensland for his book *The Failed Welfare Revolution: America's Struggle over Guaranteed Income Policy* (Princeton University Press 2008). The committee praised Steensland's book as beautifully written and superbly argued. During the 1960s and 1970s, policymakers worked to replace the U.S. welfare system with guaranteed income plans, with one proposal nearly passing into law. Steensland reconstructs the history of guaranteed economic security proposals and shows that their demise was due partly to the cultural challenge posed by eliminating the distinction between the "deserving" and "undeserving" poor. The historical research the argument rests on is meticulous, and very well presented. Overall, Steensland's book provides both a thorough case study and lays out a framework for a very promising cultural analysis of the state in both advanced and underdeveloped countries.

We would also like to make an honorable mention for another impressive work that came close to winning the award. This is Ann Mische's *Partisan Publics: Communication and Contention across Brazilian Youth Activist Networks* (Princeton University Press 2008).