

The book also addresses some additional puzzles, including why legislators—who are fairly high-level politicians far removed from the everyday lives of most citizens—are so frequently contacted with relatively mundane requests for assistance. Bussell argues that Indian citizens strategically engage in forum shopping, going to higher-level politicians and legislators when they cannot get assistance from lower-level politicians—for instance, elected village councilors—who are more likely to engage in politically discriminatory practices. Drawing on a survey of citizens, and consistent with prior work, she provides evidence that village council presidents do tend to distribute local distributive goods preferentially to co-partisans.

*Clients and Constituents* makes many important contributions. It analytically and empirically distinguishes between clientelism and constituency service (something that the literature on clientelism often fails to do, mistakenly treating any individualized contact with politicians in developing countries as “clientelism”); shows that constituency service better describes citizen–legislator interactions in India; and provides a treasure trove of data on representational style in India.

Like any important book, it also provokes questions. One question I had was whether the picture of diligent and effective constituency service that emerges from legislator surveys might not capture more the representational style of legislators than where their efforts and capacities really lie. According to the survey data, national and state legislators claim to receive on average two to three *thousand* visitors every day. This figure seems unrealistic by an order of magnitude. Nevertheless, the results are informative in indicating legislators are keen to represent themselves as such avid providers of constituency service.

*Clients and Constituents* fits well with other recent scholarship highlighting the richness of grassroots democratic participation and accountability in India. However, an important question for this literature, built over the last decade, is the recent electoral resurgence of Hindu nationalism in India, which has resulted in the erosion of the secularism of the Indian constitution, weakening of the rule of law, repression of minorities, violence against dissenters, and other forms of decay of liberal democracy, on a scale not seen since India’s democracy was altogether suspended during the state of emergency declared by Indira Gandhi between 1975 and 1977. How do we square the responsiveness of individual legislators to their constituents with the authoritarian style of the ruling party to which many legislators collectively belong? This important question is implicitly raised by this book (which was written before the electoral resurgence of the BJP), and future scholarship will have to grapple with it.

The book also opens up rich areas for future inquiry and research, in particular whether individual legislators have the capacity to provide assistance on a large-scale basis that

helps fill the gap of weak state capacity in India in a meaningful way. In India, legislators, like bureaucrats, are deeply capacity constrained. They often lack staff; they face a steep incumbency disadvantage and have to cultivate backup employment options in the absence of corporate boards, think tanks, and party organization that provide such employment in places like the United States; and despite attempts to exert control by constantly transferring bureaucrats, they, like citizens, have a tough time getting the sprawling and dysfunctional bureaucracy to carry out their orders.

The constituency service that legislators provide is vital to those who receive it and an important embodiment of real democratic accountability and responsiveness, as Bussell compellingly documents. Future research could explore whether this is enough to cover the state capacity gap from which India and many other countries, both developing and developed, suffer.

*Clients and Constituents* makes the case that these kinds of issues are worth studying—and that it may be time to move on from viewing all facets of distributive politics in developing countries through the lens of patronage and clientelism.

#### Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment: A Global and Historical Comparison.

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In one of the most important studies on the topic in recent years, Ahmet Kuru examines the causes of contemporary underdevelopment and authoritarianism in the Muslim world. Relying on the key insights of the institutional approach to economic development, Kuru analyzes both how the religio-political institutions that failed the Muslim world were established and legitimized in the first place and the role of ideas in this process.

Kuru argues that the gradual shift in the relationships between the political, economic, and religious classes starting in the eleventh and twelfth centuries reversed the intellectual and economic dynamism in the Muslim world and set in motion the process for its economic and political downfall in the modern period. In early Islamic history, the independence of the ulema class—the Muslim equivalent of the clergy—and the growth of the merchant class underlay notable progress between the ninth and twelfth centuries. The intellectual life in this period, including that of the ulema, was supported by the merchant class and did not rely on the benevolence and support of the political elite, leading to a vibrant and

thriving scientific and intellectual environment undergirded by freedom of thought, critical thinking, and openness to creativity. Kuru states that “in early Islamic history, merchants were an influential class, and that status was one of the reasons for Muslims’ economic progress” (p. 202). After the eleventh century, however, the ulema class was co-opted by the political elite and became increasingly subservient to the growing influence of the military elite. The ulema thus morphed into legitimizers of the state and the political elite. Importantly, Kuru traces the genealogy of the state–religion alliance that was entrenched in this period to the Sasanian influence on early Muslim political thought (p. 115).

This analysis of the state–religion alliance constitutes, arguably, the most important contribution of the book: it illustrates the historical construction of this alliance more than four centuries after the rise of Islam. Looking at the state–ulema alliance par excellence in the Ottoman Empire, Kuru writes, “The Ottoman model of the ulema–state alliance, therefore, represents neither a textual essence of Islam nor the entire Islamic history. Instead, it is a phenomenon constructed during a particular period of Islamic history” (p. 202). The intellectual stagnation of the Muslim world correlates with the marginalization of the merchant class and the concurrent rise of this state–religion alliance (p. 154). The rise of orthodoxy and orthopraxy during this period first marginalized nonreligious scholarship and subsequently substantially limited the space available to sciences such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine (p. 106). Over time, this process resulted in the “declining role of philosophy and increasing status of religious preaching in Muslim intellectual life” (p. 173).

*Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment* does not follow a strict chronological order. The author first provides an overview of the current state of violence, underdevelopment, and authoritarianism in Muslim-majority countries in chapters 1–3, using a range of empirical evidence. These major problems in the Muslim world are not treated as independent developments but rather as interrelated outcomes. Yet this section goes beyond a purely empirical discussion; instead, the author reviews main arguments in the literature for why violence, underdevelopment, and authoritarianism are more pervasive in the Muslim world compared to the rest of the world. After this synopsis, Kuru presents an incredibly rich, well-researched historical analysis of the evolution of Muslim religio-political life between the seventh and twentieth centuries (chapters 4–7). Critically, this analysis traces the up-and-down trajectory of Muslim intellectual life to show how Kuru’s theory concerning the key effect of the state–ulema alliance better accounts for the gradual failure of the Muslim world, particularly in comparison to some of the prevailing accounts of this failure such as colonialism.

*Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment* is a meticulous analysis of political, economic, and religious dynamics in the Muslim world; it skillfully weaves together distinct literatures for a broad view of Islam. The book makes two original contributions to the literature. First, Kuru’s analysis does not merely focus on the contemporary period when the Muslim world is stuck in a cycle of underdevelopment and authoritarianism but rather takes the longer view and examines variation over time to pin down the causal mechanism at work. He argues that “contemporary Muslim countries’ political and socioeconomic problems have long-term historical origins and cannot simply be explained as the result of either Islam or Western colonialism” (p. 3). In this regard, Kuru’s comparative analysis of the scientific, intellectual, and economic progress in early Islamic history with the stagnant state of intellectual, economic, and political life in the Muslim world in the modern period is extremely valuable. Second, Kuru ascribes underdevelopment and authoritarianism in the Muslim world in part to religion. However, he forcefully rejects essentialist arguments on both sides (i.e. “Islam is bad” and “Islam is good” [p. 84]). Diverging from theological arguments, Kuru makes a key contribution to the supply side of the religion–politics relationship by focusing on the “human side” of religion (Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, 2000): his analysis shows the historical variation in how the relationship between religion and politics is constructed. Kuru’s treatment of Ghazali is instructive in this regard. Ghazali was a vaunted member of the ulema in the eleventh century (1058–1111), with an outsized influence on Muslim intellectual and religious life that lasts to this day. At critical junctions in his life, Ghazali was shaped by his proximity to powerful political networks, according to Kuru. Although he cautioned the ulema against close association with the ruling elite, Ghazali nonetheless harped on the idea of a religion–state brotherhood, reinforcing the early construction of the state–ulema alliance for the next millennium. Likewise, Kuru examines Sufism, one of the celebrated and most tolerant faces of Islam, its integration into the state–ulema deal, and how it helped entrench the budding close relationship between the state and religion in Islam (p. 144). As such, this focus on Sufism provides Kuru’s causal argument on the construction of the state–ulema alliance with a dissemination mechanism among the broader population (p. 149).

It is a challenge to find a weakness in Kuru’s *Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment*, because the book takes head-on the major theories of Islam’s role in contemporary political outcomes with convincing evidence. Like other macrolevel analyses, however, one could be rightly tempted to suggest that the sheer scope of the study in terms of its temporal and geographic coverage makes it difficult to evaluate the applicability of the causal

argument in particular cases. Although the book connects transitions well between different time periods and illustrates how the relationships hold and evolve in distinct polities over time, the argument does not travel to the same extent in explaining different outcomes. One can establish a more direct causal relationship between underdevelopment and the institutional structure that the state–ulema alliance established, whereas the effect is more indirect and contingent on contextual and contemporary factors in the cases of authoritarianism and violence. Nonetheless, *Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment* is a tour de force that lays out the broader context for the failures of the contemporary Muslim world in perspective and the ways in which religion can shape political outcomes.

**Religion and Brazilian Democracy: Mobilizing the People of God.** By Amy Erica Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 222p. \$99.99 cloth  
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Amy Erica Smith's impressive new book, *Religion and Brazilian Democracy: Mobilizing the People of God*, combines rich and varied data to analyze the dynamics of religion and politics in Brazil and to assess their implications for democracy in general. Clerics are central actors here, operating as entrepreneurs and vote brokers, pressing issues that will recruit and retain members while working to establish and maintain contacts with politicians and public institutions. Smith is sensitive to variation across and within religious groups and carefully matches her analysis of clerics with attention to what congregants hear and how and to what extent they respond. She concludes with reflections on representation and on the short and potential long-term impacts of clerical activism on democratic politics.

The concept of “culture wars” is prominent, highlighting clerical activism sparked by perceived threats to God's will, which stem above all from changes in gender roles, growing tolerance of homosexuality, the advancement of a supposed “gay agenda” in schools and communities, and same-sex marriage. Although such issues are indeed visible in Brazil as elsewhere, the notion of culture wars may exaggerate the capacities and unity of the people and organizations studied here. Smith shows that Catholic clergy are more tolerant and accepting than evangelical clergy of sexual identity issues and more likely to advance others, such as ecological decay and economic and racial inequality, not to mention crime and corruption.

The emphasis on clerics as competitive entrepreneurs is consonant with much rational-choice work. Religious leaders and groups compete for members, resources,

visibility, and a legitimate place in the public sphere. Context makes a difference here. In the three decades since the end of military rule in Brazil, the context for religion and politics has been utterly transformed by convergent elements that reinforce one another to elicit and encourage new generations of leaders, freed from old ties and attracted by new opportunities and the possibilities of advancement and new connections.

Smith brings together data from national surveys, local surveys of churches, focus groups, survey experiments posing scenarios for respondents, and brief but illuminating qualitative interviews. All these data are subjected to the technical apparatus of contemporary social science in convincing fashion. Substantive chapters present “scenes” that provide a vivid portrait of how the religion–politics nexus plays out day to day.

We learn how religious teachings evolve and influence the actions of clergy, as they build and consolidate churches and communities and work to mobilize voters and make political deals and connections. Issues of sexual identity resonate well with evangelicals, who stress the urgency of concerted action. The end of times is near and God's wrath is to be feared, so it is imperative to spread the word. Not long ago it was common to see such communities as offering their members an escape from “the world” and focusing on building societies of the saved. Politics was seen as a realm of sin to be avoided in favor of working on salvation. The turn to action is widely visible in the evangelical world. But with limited exceptions, all this energy and motivation have not produced enduring evangelical political blocs, much less political parties. Politics has its own rules, and evangelical entrepreneurs often end up colonized, divided, and abandoned by potential allies. In Brazil, the weakness of political parties makes alliances volatile and at risk of betrayal, and “the evangelical style of congregation also exacerbated party fragmentation” (p. 161).

Smith tackles the difficult issue of how to identify and measure church and clerical influence on political views, voting, and ultimately support for democracy. Voters are mobilized more effectively at the local level than nationally. This makes sense given the urgent needs and practical interests of many people, but it also raises the question of whether those mobilized acquire skills and orientations that make for enduring democratic perspectives and practices. Sustaining activism can be difficult under the best of circumstances. Oscar Wilde is reputed to have said that the problem with socialism is that it leaves one with no free evenings. Multiple studies suggest that the same is true for activist religion. The meteoric growth of many new churches suggests that incoming members bring their affiliations and views with them, so it may be that the churches provide vehicles for reinforcing previously held views. Evangelical churches seem able to mobilize followers on a larger scale than do Catholics. The intense inner