religion and religious politics in all its intricacies. Early in the book, he does provide some feel for the broader phenomenon within which communal practice is embedded, but this broader context recedes into the background as he develops his own theory and especially as he works his way through the empirics. Despite having just praised the book for its focus, I nonetheless have a critique to make on this same point: ultimately, I wanted to see more religion in the story.

Let me clarify why I think this critique is a reasonable one, even though it appears to fault the book for failing to do something it was not trying to do. Put succinctly, I wanted to see more about religion not for its own sake but rather to provide context for the findings on communal religious practice. The rub is that, for the most part, that context *is* in the book: it's just that it is buried out of the way.

I am saying nothing new when I acknowledge that religion is a multidimensional phenomenon; many scholars have adopted the sociological view of religion's three *B*s: beliefs, belonging, and behavior. Hoffman's focus on communal practice overlaps partially with the latter two facets. Yet we also expect these facets to be correlated: people who are observant in their behavior are often, albeit not always, observant in their beliefs as well. To the degree that we wish to separate out the effects of one aspect of religion—as with communal religious practice—we must take care to watch out for common causality, as well as a higher-order construct under which all these facets nest.

I am not trying to make a "you forgot to control for X" critique. By and large, Hoffman does include controls in his empirical models for other aspects of religion, such as personal piety, that we might also suspect of being relevant to the attitude stew that is support for democracy. But that is the point: they are treated as *controls* rather than opportunities to distinguish communal religious practice from other aspects of religion. There is a more powerful case in favor of focusing on one discrete element of religion when not all the parts push in the same direction, if they do at all.

As a poignant example, Hoffman's well-executed priming experiment in chapter 5 demonstrates that communal primes affect people as theorized: pushing Lebanese Shiites in favor of democracy and their Sunni counterparts against it. Yet the experiment also includes a personal piety prime that yields null results, a point only mentioned in a single sentence (p. 98). Blink and you miss it. My quibble is that this null is informative, and burying it leaves money on the table: it shows us that not just any old thing about religion affects people's views on democracy but that, consistent with the book's theory, communal considerations do. Ultimately, then, my critique is one of context: to see the effect of communal practice, it helps to see how other facets of religion affect people or fail to do so.

Despite this critique, Hoffman has put together a novel and well-executed study about communal religious practice. It offers new insights for scholars of both religious and ethnic politics and is a laudable addition to our collective efforts to understand the effects of religion on democratic attitudes.

Why Democracies Develop and Decline. Edited by Michael Coppedge, Amanda B. Edgell, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Staffan I. Lindberg. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 350p. $120.00 cloth.
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In this ambitious new volume edited by Michael Coppedge, Amanda Edgell, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Staffan Lindberg, a collection of top scholars reassess the evidence for some the most commonly tested hypotheses about democracy's rise and fall using data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. The volume is structured thematically with chapters focusing on geography and demographics, international influences, economic determinants, institutional determinants, and the role of civil society and social movements. Despite its broad focus and myriad of tests, the volume is incredibly cohesive. This cohesion is largely attributable to the final chapter where the editors construct a comprehensive theoretical and empirical framework that integrates the findings from the previous chapters.

The richness of the V-Dem data is on display in chapter 2, where Carl Henrik Knutsen and Svend-Erik Skaaning descriptively examine trends in democracy between 1789 and 2018. Using global levels of V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index (polyarchy), they replicate well-known patterns such as the waves and reverse waves of democratization identified by Samuel Huntington. Yet, they also consider more nuanced patterns in the subcomponents of democracy that can only be assessed with V-Dem data. Although most of these patterns are consistent with the existing literature, the quantitative data provided by V-Dem creates many opportunities for future research.

In chapters 3–7, the contributors follow Jan Teorell's *Determinants of Democratization* (2010) by examining how different categories of explanatory variables influence polyarchy levels, changes, upturns, and downturns. Because of the comprehensive nature of these tests, I limit my discussion to some of the most robust findings. In chapter 3, John Gerring examines the long-run effects of geographic and demographic variables, finding that warmer climates and distance from natural harbors negatively correlate with polyarchy levels. Michael Coppedge et al. examine international influences from exogenous global shocks (international war and GDP growth) and

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endogenous networks (contagious neighbors, alliances, and colonial ties) in chapter 4. Using cutting-edge spatio-temporal autoregressive (STAR) models, they find that polyarchy upturns and downturns among neighbors are contagious in the same direction. These contagion effects are initially small, but grow over time. Also, international wars tend to decrease polyarchy in the short-term and global economic growth tends to increase polyarchy upturns. In chapter 5, Carl Henrik Knutsen and Sirianne Dahlum examine economic influences. They find no relationship between GDP per capita and polyarchy upturns, which they argue provides "another nail in the coffin for the merits of modernization theory" (p. 159). However, higher levels of GDP per capita are associated with higher polyarchy levels and smaller polyarchy downturns. Allen Hicken, Samuel Baltz, and Fabricio Vasselai examine institutional influences in chapter 6, focusing on state capacity, presidentialism, and party systems. Professionalized bureaucracies are associated with a lower risk of democratic breakdown. Contrary to Juan Linz's argument, they find no evidence that presidentialism is detrimental to democratic survival. In chapter 7, Michael Bernhard and Amanda Edgell examine the role of civil society and social movements. They find that the organizational capacity of civil society is positively associated with polyarchy levels and upturns. Additionally, right-wing antisystem movements are found to be associated with larger polyarchy downturns, which is consistent with recent experiences in countries like Hungary, Poland, and the United States.

As chapter 2 demonstrates, democracy follows a "punctuated equilibrium," where generally stable levels are occasionally disrupted by upturns or downturns. In the final chapter, the editors argue that this is the product of endogenous processes linking four types of causes: distal, distinct-intermediate, similar-intermediate, and proximate. Distal causes are exogenous and relatively fixed characteristics such as geography and demographics. Distinct-intermediate causes are conceptually different from democracy and endogenous to other causes. This includes variables like GDP per capita. Similar-intermediate causes like civil society are conceptually similar, but not identical, to democracy and are endogenous to other causes. Finally, proximate causes include dynamic variables such as social movements that are endogenous to other causes.

The editors analyze this endogenous causal process using path models that predict polyarchy levels, upturns, and downturns. Their analysis of polyarchy levels emphasizes "protective belt" variables including state capacity, the organizational capacity of civil society, and institutionalized parties that help to keep polyarchy levels relatively stable. A vibrant civil society is found to be the most important protective belt variable through its direct and indirect effects on polyarchy levels. It both directly confronts challenges to democracy and indirectly supports democracy through its positive relationships with party institutionalization and state capacity. Furthermore, protective belt variables are themselves determined in part by variables earlier in the causal chain like literacy, dependence on agriculture, GDP per capita, resource dependence, and Protestant population.

Dynamic proximate variables, including nonviolent campaigns and the civil society participatory environment, have direct positive associations with polyarchy upturns. Global economic growth is positively associated with upturns, both directly and indirectly through its promotion of civil society participation. While agricultural dependence has a direct negative association with upturns, the authors remain cautious about the mechanisms at play since the variable is highly correlated with literacy and GDP per capita. The model provides only qualified evidence for modernization theory with indirect links between socioeconomic variables and polyarchy upturns being mediated through nonviolent campaigns and civil society participation. Contrary to modernization theory, polyarchy levels in the previous year predict GDP per capita, flipping the proposed causal link.

The most interesting and important findings from the downturns model are related to antisystem movements. They are directly associated with increases in the size of downturns. However, contrary to the findings in chapter 7, antisystem movements appear to be the product of left-wing movements. Right-wing movements are found to be reactionary, organizing in response to left-wing movements. Additionally, high state capacity is found to reduce the prevalence of antisystem movements, thus indirectly reducing the size of downturns.

This volume makes several important contributions to the literature. The contributors challenge scholars to think more carefully about the causal sequences linking variables to democracy and to consider the complementarities between different theories. While the rise and decline of democracy involves many complex relationships, their punctuated equilibrium framework and classification of four types of causal variables can be easily applied by other scholars to improve their specification of theoretical and empirical models.

New insights provided into explanations like modernization theory speak to the efficacy of their approach. Knutsen and Dahlum find more evidence for the hypothesis of Przeworski and his colleagues that GDP per capita aids democratic survival, but not democratic transitions. The editors also inspire scholars to think more critically about modernization theory by failing to find a direct relationship between GDP per capita and polyarchy levels, upturns, and downturns.

Several methodological contributions are made throughout the book as well. For instance, Coppedge et al. highlight the importance of accounting for spatial endogeneity when testing international influences. In chapter 6, Hicken, Baltz, and Vasselai provide an alternative to selecting subjective

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cut points separating democracies from dictatorships when using continuous measures of democracy. Their analysis of institutional determinants of democratic transitions and survival present estimates from a large number of cut points so readers can make their own conclusions about the findings. Finally, while path models are subject to strong model specification assumptions, the editors make a convincing case for using them more frequently to model endogenous relationships.

The volume also has several important weaknesses. In some cases, hypotheses are dismissed without sufficient evidence. For instance, Hicken, Baltz, and Vasselai dismiss the hypothesis suggesting party system fragmentation discourages democratic transitions. However, their findings come from using the share of seats held by the largest party in the legislature as a proxy for fragmentation. While they argue that the concentration of power, not its fragmentation, decreases the risk of democratic transitions, this evidence is quite consistent with party system fragmentation arguments. Where opposition parties fail to form coalitions in electoral autocracies, ruling parties are able to dominate elections and maintain the regime.

Also, while the tests of Coppedge et al. stand out for their methodological sophistication, their predictions of contagion effects from neighbors raise questions about their findings. The predictions for Zimbabwe suggest that neighbor contagion effects increased before the transition between the Rhodesian regime and Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. It is unclear how the level of democracy in neighboring countries during the Rhodesian regime increased its level of democracy. There is also another increase in the neighbor contagion effect in the 1990s, presumably because of South Africa's democratic transition. However, it is difficult to imagine that Zimbabwe would have been less democratic in the late 1990s and 2000s without South Africa's transition to democracy.

Finally, the volume fails to test arguments linking authoritarian institutions like regime type and legislatures to democracy outcomes. While data coverage on some of these variables is limited relative to V-Dem's democracy measures, their important role in the literature on democratization seems to merit their inclusion. Nevertheless, this volume, with its rich findings and theoretical framework, is certain to become a go-to reference for scholars of democratization and democratic survival.

Protecting the Ballot: How First-Wave Democracies Ended Electoral Corruption. By Isabela Mares. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022. 264p. $120.00 cloth, $35.00 paper.
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While the moment of democratization is typically tied to the adoption of universal suffrage, administering elections is only the first step toward building a full democracy. Elections signal that political leaders are, in theory, open to competition and accountability. But candidates and politicians often manipulate elections, using tactics that include vote buying, coercion, threats, and outright fraud to secure victory.

As Isabela Mares explains in her new book, *Protecting the Ballot*, democratization of the electoral process is distinct from the transition to democratic elections. It requires new laws that define and penalize electoral corruption, new values that orient voters against corruption, and new campaign approaches that emphasize policy differences rather than material inducements. The technology of elections also changes in this process, toward ballot secrecy and voter autonomy. The politics of these reforms is little understood; Mares notes that "electoral integrity reforms have been an important but overlooked dimension of the process of democratization" (p. 209). There are ongoing and significant debates over why leaders embrace elections, but these may not explain why they later propose, or acquiesce to, electoral reforms.

Mares is interested in the "democratization of electoral practices" in the first-wave democracies of the French Third Republic, Imperial Germany, Britain, and Belgium across a period covering roughly the half-century between 1870 and 1920. *Protecting the Ballot* expands upon Mares's extensive body of work that has examined electoral malfeasance in early democratizers (i.e., Imperial Germany) as well as late democratizers (Eastern Europe). Here, Mares surveys a wide set of reforms that include sanctioning corrupt exchanges like vote buying and treating, curbing the use of state resources in campaigns, providing for voter autonomy through ballot envelopes or isolating spaces, and limiting the instance of fraud during ballot counting.

Theories of democratization emphasize macro-level structural variables to explain why leaders transition to democracy. Mares departs from modernization theorists, who argue that rising levels of economic development should reduce corruption, as well as from redistributive approaches, which emphasize elites' perceptions of future redistribution based on levels of inequality. She advances instead a microhistorical institutionalist account that emphasizes the resources and incentives of *legislators* as the primary political actors who initiate and pass reforms (p. 20). In particular, she identifies the political factors that produce coalitions in favor of reforms, focusing on the resources—either private funds or public governmental resources—available to elected officials. Mares draws on a rich set of parliamentary archives and debates for her qualitative historical analysis, combining it with quantitative evidence about individual legislators and roll-call votes on reform legislation.

Noting that politicians who succeed in a corrupt environment are unlikely to support reforms, Mares argues that legislators will tend to support reforms either when

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