Diamond, "Facing up to the Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy*, 26[1], 2015; Jason Seawright, *Party-System Collapse: The Roots of Crisis in Perú and Venezuela*, 2012), Handlin is the first to explicitly outline and test the mechanisms by which they operate.

Similarly, although scholars have analyzed party building (see Steven Levitsky et al., "Introduction: Challenges of Party-Building in Latin America," in *Challenges of Party-Building in Latin America*, 2016) and party system collapse (see Jana Morgan, *Bankrupt Representation and Party System Collapse*, 2011), Cyr gives the question a new twist. She does not seek to unveil the causes of either of these phenomena, but rather explores why existing parties (fail to) survive national electoral crises. Her analysis bridges the aforementioned literature with debates regarding what a party is and how to measure its strength. Unlike most analyses in comparative politics, which focus almost exclusively on electoral outcomes, Cyr follows the literature on the United States and conceptualizes parties as organizations that operate both in the electorate and in public opinion. With that in mind, she rethinks party strength. Resources are commonly mentioned to understand party building (see Adrienne LeBas, *From Protest to Parties: Party Building and Democratization in Africa*, 2011); however, Cyr goes further and unpacks the concept. She differentiates the type of resources that parties have, what they need to attain these resources, and the specific purposes these resources serve.

The *Fates of Political Parties* and *State Crisis in Fragile Democracies* stand out methodologically as well. Handlin's use of process tracing is very rigorous. Although comparative historical analysis can and is often used interchangeably for theory building and theory testing, Handlin separates these two objectives. He developed most of his hypotheses before collecting data and then used process tracing to assess them. To do so, he outlined three causal mechanisms and drew explicit hypotheses for every step in each one of them. He then assessed these hypotheses with data (empirical observations) and used process tracing tests – "*hoop*," "*straw in the wind*," "*doubly decisive*," and "*smoking gun*" – to evaluate the strength of his evidence. Handlin's book is an excellent example of how scholars can improve transparency in qualitative methods.

Cyr's methodological contributions are equally impressive. Her book is a prime example of mixed-methods research. She measured organizational resources using expert surveys and interviews, and ideational resources using secondary sources, interviews, and, most notably, focus groups. The last methodology, an increasingly popular technique in political science, allowed her to measure abstract resources, such as branding. She triangulated the collected data to maximize measurement accuracy.

Notwithstanding their methodological and theoretical contributions, Cyr's and Handlin's books have some shortcomings. Although Handlin's book relies heavily on the existence (or lack) of left-wing mobilization infrastructure, that infrastructure is never properly defined and seems, at points, tautological. In Brazil, for example, the strength of the Left manifests in the Worker Party's (PT) electoral success (pp. 102–5). In Venezuela, on the contrary, it manifests in the existence of experienced left-wing professionals, regardless of the fragmentation and extensive electoral losses of the left-wing parties *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS) and *La Causa R* (pp. 58–61). Similarly, in Uruguay and Chile, the strength of the Left is measured at the party level, whereas in Ecuador and Bolivia it is measured at the grassroots social movement level. Are all of these "Lefts" equally powerful? What type of resources did each leader tap into? To what extent did the availability of different types of resources shape subsequent regime outcomes? The theory outlined in *The Fates of Political Parties* seems particularly well posed to answer some of these questions.

Cyr could also have benefited from Handlin's work. Although all of the cases in her book deal with party system collapse followed by severe backsliding and even regime change, unlike Handlin, she ignores regime dynamics in her analysis. Electoral competition in Perú, Venezuela, and Bolivia became increasingly unfair after Fujimori, Chávez, and Morales, respectively, came to power. Parties in these contexts faced a shortage of low-cost resources particular to competitive authoritarian regimes. It is unclear how the uneven access to resources and the media, or the manipulation of electoral rules, affected the availability of other resources or parties' opportunity to use them. National electoral crises need not lead to democratic erosion: What happens when parties and party systems face significant transformations, but access to the media and electoral resources does not change? Would that modify the resource calculation? Would that make some resources more likely to promote survival (and/or revival) than others?

Party and regime dynamics have been closely related in Latin America. The books analyzed here provide both interesting theoretical insights and pose provocative questions to further analyze these phenomena.

Citizenship and Contemporary Direct Democracy. By David Altman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 276p. $105.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592719001786

— Matt Qvortrup, *Coventry University*

There is swagger, chutzpah even, in David Altman's latest opus *Citizenship and Contemporary Direct Democracy*. At a time when political science research is often either too

technical to be relevant or too banal to warrant attention, it is refreshing to encounter a book that promises to present "a new general theory that explains. . .the likelihood of CI-MDD [Citizen Initiated Mechanisms of Direct Democracy] adoption in a given country" (p. 55). The grand theory Altman seeks to develop is designed to explain when provisions for citizen-initiated referendums are adopted, although he also touches on when they are held, when they are won (or lost), and proposed mechanisms for reform.

Altman is at his most original when theorizing the reasons why countries adopt mechanisms of citizen-initiated referendums. No other serious study has dealt satisfactorily with this issue before. According to the author, "the crucial determinants of CI-MDD adoption [are]: crisis, past use of MDD, and the level of democratization" (p. 64). Operationally, these variables are correlated with Altman's unique *Index of Direct Democracy Practice* (DDPP). One can always quibble with the choice of statistical measure, but the reasons given for adopting this one are convincing and the results are statistically impressive.

Some cases conform to the theory. For example, after Slovenia broke away from Yugoslavia (following a referendum in 1990), the Slovenians inserted a new clause into the constitution that stated, "The National Assembly shall call a referendum on the entry into force of a law that it has adopted if so required by at least forty thousand voters" (Art. 90). This is, Altman suggests, a clear corroboration of his hypothesis, because the provision was introduced after "rapid democratization, high levels of democracy... and vivid memories of a successful use of a MMD [Mechanism of Direct Democracy]" (p. 76).

But other examples are less convincing. At a stretch, it could be argued (and Altman does this) that the introduction of citizen-initiated referendums in the Italian constitution followed a crisis (the end of World War II), rapid democratization (after two decades of fascism), and "vivid memories" (of the 1946 referendum on the abolition of the monarchy). Yet the *referendum abrogativo* (Art. 75, which contains the provision that grants Italians the right to request a referendum on all existing laws) was only implemented in 1970 following an opportunistic compromise between the Communists and the Christian Democrats to repeal the ban on divorce and *not* as a result of events that happened in the 1940s. And other examples seem to falsify the theory. Thus, the adoption of the citizen-initiated referendums in Switzerland in 1874 was not the result of a crisis, nor was there an increase in the levels of democratization, although there were vivid memories of previous referendums (in this case the 1866 constitutional referendum that extended citizenship to the Jews). The theory would have been corroborated had the mechanisms been introduced in the wake of the Sonderbund War in 1848; however, the constitution adopted in that year only provided for mandatory referendums on constitutional changes (see, e.g., Wolf Lindner, *Swiss Democracy*, 2010). Further, and more critically, there is little to suggest that the adoption of the citizen-initiated *wet raadgevend* referendum in the Netherlands in 2014 conformed to Altman's theory (see Saskia Hollander, *The Politics of Referendum Use in European Democracies,* 2019). And there is no convincing explanation why New Zealand's parliament passed the Citizens' Initiated Referendum Act of 1993. Overall, the model is statistically impressive, but the case studies challenge the universality of the results.

Perhaps the author should have been less categorical and aimed instead for mid-ranging theories. Indeed, his more modest observation that CI-MDD are "usually introduced in times of political change and instability" and that these "times produce windows of opportunity . . . accompanied by anti-party feelings and apolitical beliefs —situations where there is willingness to break with the past in one way or another" (p. 44) is more accurate. Moreover, Altman does not mention the ubiquitous factor of miscalculation: situations when provisions for citizen referendums are introduced only to backfire, as was the case in Italy in the 1970s and a century before in Switzerland.

Notwithstanding the anomalies and seemingly falsifying cases, Altman's book is a tour de force: it is a study that combines statistical prowess with exceptional scholarship and an extraordinary knowledge of the literature in Spanish, German, Italian, and English. In addition to its impressive statistical analyses, the book cites interesting and often surprising research findings; for example, that referendums have a "positive effect on women's political inclusion" (p. 150). Further, *Citizenship and Contemporary Direct Democracy* does a superb job in empirically debunking many common myths about referendums. Some commentators have lamented that provisions for CI-MDD strengthen conservative forces (ee Liubomir Topaloff, "Elite Strategy or Populist Weapon?" *Journal of Democracy*, 28 (3), 2017). Yet based on both statistical analysis and detailed case studies, Altman finds "no evidence of statistically significant skewedness. . .to either side of the ideological divide" (p. 137).

The book is at its most interesting when Altman analyzes the factors that determine the outcome of referendums. He corroborates my "honeymoon theory"— "most no outcomes occur when a government has been in office for many years" (Qvortrup, *A Comparative Study of Referendums,* 2005)—with solid statistical data. For example, "a plebiscite or obligatory referendum has a probability of success of 70 percent during the first 100 days of a government in office. [This] situation remains relatively stable until 800 days in office (about 2.2 years).... Once 1,600 days in office have elapsed the

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probability that a [top-down] referendum will succeed drops below 50 percent" (p. 101).

Interestingly, Altman also finds that the opposite logic applies to citizen-initiated referendums. These are *more* likely to succeed the longer the government has been in office: "their probability of success only increases above 50 percent after the government has been in office for eight years." He also finds "that the probability that a popular initiative or referendum will succeed is nearly 90 percent when a country is experiencing an extreme economic contraction" (p. 101).

Citizenship and Contemporary Direct Democracy is not merely a book about the recurrent patterns and laws of direct democracy. The author also proposes mechanisms for how referendums can be made compatible with the ideals of deliberative democracy. To this end, he proposes that a "Deliberative Citizens Commission" be established, in "which a stratified random sample of eligible voters are convened for the purpose of discussion, deliberating and offering a policy question that will be decided upon in a future popular vote" (p. 183). Yet, Altman does not mention that this mechanism was used before the 2018 abortion referendum in Ireland (see Jane Suiter, "Deliberation in Action–Ireland's Abortion Referendum," *Political Insight*, 9 (3), 2018). Sometimes, good ideas are overtaken by events, and the success of the Irish provision only supports his argument.

Although one might take issue with some of its conclusions, this is an impressive study. To paraphrase Robert Nozick's words about Rawls, henceforth "students of referendums, must follow Altman's lead or explain why not!"

The Quality of Divided Democracies: Minority Inclusion, Exclusion, and Representation in the New Europe. By Licia Cianetti. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019. 264p. $75.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592719002172

— Daina Eglitis, *George Washington University*

Lucia Cianetti's book, *The Quality of Divided Democracies: Minority Inclusion, Exclusion, and Representation in the New Europe*, is an examination of how democracy functions in practice in ethnically divided societies. Although Cianetti has chosen to highlight two cases of post-Soviet states that have particularly significant ethnic cleavages, she posits that ensuring full political equality in increasingly multicultural societies is a challenge in nearly all modern democratic states today. Her book is an ambitious effort to describe that challenge, recognize its constituent parts, and lay out "some of the coordinates needed to understand what is involved in making our contemporary, ethnically heterogeneous democracies work" (p. 2).

Cianetti's work is premised on the fundamental normative assumption that democracy entails the effective inclusion of all those who are subject to decisions taken by the state and its elected bodies. Alas, as she points out, the practical meaning of "inclusion" is contestable. The book is in part an exploration of this meaning and seeks to assess the extent to, and channels by which, minority communities exercise voice in policy making. Cianetti introduces an original concept to convey some of the challenges to political inclusion and to policy making that is attentive to minority interests. The *presence-polarization dilemma* highlights the paradox that "a liberal minority policy can be the result of an exclusionary democratic process, while an inclusionary democratic process does not necessarily return policies that are favorable to the minority" (p. 7). In Chapter 2, Cianetti elaborates the theoretical foundations of the book with attention to the presence-polarization dilemma, which she develops out of key concepts in the debate on divided democracies. She uses it to assess the inclusiveness of the democratic process and the means by which minority groups gain access to the levers of national- and local-level political decision making.

In Chapter 3, Cianetti describes the political landscape of Estonia and Latvia in the postcommunist period to set the stage for her political analysis of the status of Russian-speaking minorities. She is thorough in her discussion of the legal dimensions of exclusive citizenship laws, as well as the party systems and electoral practices of these states. The key weakness of this chapter is the author's failure to set the historical scene in which these communities evolved into their present form. Indeed, she treats the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries, which Western states rightly recognized as an illegal annexation, as a subjective political position: "The restorationist approach to nation building that eventually prevailed maintained that the USSR had illegally occupied Estonia and Latvia, and so the two countries had the right to restore their sovereignty in continuity with the interwar Estonian and Latvian populations" (p. 39). Although the question of whether restorationism, which foresaw political continuity with the interwar independent states, was exclusionary and produced a problematic foundation for democratic development is worthy of examination, the illegality and material consequences of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic countries in 1940 are facts. Cianetti acknowledges that a full discussion of sociopolitical history is not possible, but suggests that her goal is to highlight features that are relevant to the contemporary political status of the Russophone minority. This makes her omission of even a brief Soviet-era history problematic: the provenance of these populations is directly relevant to understanding the perception of political risk that has affected decisions about inclusion and exclusion made by politicians from parties supported by many Latvian and Estonian voters. This background should be provided, rather than assumed or dismissed.

The remaining substantive chapters focus on five key channels for minority access to policy making: