

instance, it is unclear whether the author's argument explains why large-scale insurrections were more likely to occur in these dictatorships or, rather, why these dictatorships seemed so inept in handling public unrest. The former claim is doubtful because the monarchies of the Arab world also lack support among their citizenry; indeed, one saw revolutionary mobilization (Bahrain) and two more experienced two-year periods of unprecedented, sustained, urban protest (Morocco, Jordan). The latter notion has more purchase, but then the argument evokes extreme path dependency that is not logically justified by the author: Endemic insecurity at the onset of state building engendered weakly institutionalized regimes that were destined to disintegrate. Owen rejects cultural explanations for the convergence of Arab state builders upon a common institutional pattern, but provides no other reasoning for it besides the historical truth that it happened.

Neither does Owen consider rival hypotheses. One begs attention. Oil, or more broadly hydrocarbon wealth, may explain the weakness of autocratic republics. The literature on rentier states, though aging, still furnishes the useful reminder that the resources possessed by dictators prefigure the survival strategies at their disposal. The richest oil states were kingdoms like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and they defused the first signs of protest with the promise of greater economic redistribution and more generous social welfarism. But so, too, did republican Algeria utilize its hydrocarbon wellspring to head off early demonstrations. Poorer kingdoms with more modest budgetary reserves were precisely those that could not purchase peace, namely, Bahrain, Jordan, and Morocco. Above all, most of the autocratic republics that fell during the Arab Spring all lacked profuse oil and gas rents; Libya had some but grossly misallocated it. The point here is not to swap institutionalism for rentierism as an explanatory logic, but rather highlight the need to systematically weight other potential hypotheses.

Yet in all fairness, these critiques underscore more the contemporary nature of the Arab Spring than this work's lack of diligence. *The Rise and Fall of Arab Presidents for Life* is much like other early forays into ongoing historical moments, useful for insight but lacking in rigor. This is to be expected, and future work on authoritarianism and Middle East politics would do well to build upon the narratives and arguments presented here.

The Triumph of Israel's Radical Right. By Ami Pedahzur.
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— Eyal Chowers, *Tel-Aviv University*

The Zionist revolution sought to turn a people dispersed across the globe into a nation and to reshape the Jew into a political being—one who enjoys full and equal rights unconditionally and who is a citizen responsible for the

character and conduct of his or her state. While this revolution is in many ways a success against all odds and has helped to revise Jewish conceptions of freedom in history and notions of what can be achieved through radical collective action, the current political predicament of the state of Israel is puzzling. Because of its own deeds, its future is highly uncertain. Rather than preserve its integrity as a Jewish and democratic state (an uneasy balancing act in itself), since the 1967 war the state has embarked on settlement activities in the territories it has occupied that will force it either to forgo its character as a Jewish nation-state and establish one state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea or to relinquish its democratic-liberal principles.

Ami Pedahzur's *The Triumph of Israel's Radical Right* explains how Israel arrived at its current crossroads. It meticulously and lucidly analyzes the ascent of the Israeli Right, step by step, after 1967 and up to the present. Pedahzur traces the humble beginnings of the settlement movement under hesitant and confused Labor governments, the expansion of the settlements by Menahem Begin and Ariel Sharon in the 1980s, and the seeds of racist language introduced by Rabbi Meir Kahane and later by the religious party Shas. The book demonstrates the marriage between resistance to settlement evacuation and hateful and inciting speech leading to the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and shows how these two features of the new Right have been intertwined ever since. This book joins Oded Haklai's *Palestinian Ethnonationalism in Israel* (2011), Motti Inbari's *Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises* (2012), and other recent, fresh works in trying to explain the changing landscape of Israeli politics.

Space will not permit me to mention all of the events, processes, organizations, and individuals discussed by Pedahzur. His analysis, however, underscores two factors: the settlers' "network" and the idea of "nativism."

First, he suggests that, rather than understanding the ascent of the Right in Israel in terms of parties and parliamentary politics, we should think in terms of a flexible political network—"a loose and dynamic composite of political actors whose worldview on various issues overlaps and who frequently come together for the purpose of shaping policies in the spirit of their shared ideology" (p. 9). The network includes social movements, settlers' organizations, individual activists, bureaucrats in government agencies and semigovernmental bodies, Knesset members and ministers, Jewish-American financiers, security forces personnel, and more. Pedahzur demonstrates the network's effectiveness in expanding Jewish settlements in terms of both the territory controlled by Jews and the number of settlers. The network's members are intensely committed to their cause, legally and financially sophisticated, masters at co-opting officials in the Israeli system and penetrating the system, and able mobilizers of masses of people.

Over the years, the network has expanded the number of settlers in the West Bank from none to about 350,000 (not including Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem). Since the 1990s, the Yesha Council (which represents the municipal councils of Jewish settlements in the West Bank) has followed a sophisticated plan. “Geographically,” writes Pedahzur, “the goal was to divide the West Bank into vertical and horizontal continuums of Jewish settlements” and to prevent “Palestinian population centers from expanding and therefore eliminating the possibility for Palestinians to attain territorial continuity” (p. 131).

The rise of the radical Right in Israel, according to Pedahzur, is also due to the second factor: the growth of “nativism” in Israeli society and politics. Nativism means that the state “belongs” to those of a certain ethnicity; non-native individuals, groups, and ideas are seen as threatening to the homogeneity of the nation-state (p. 6). The term is a bit confusing in the Israeli case, since modern Jews immigrated to Palestine rather than being “natives” of the place. Yet the book superbly demonstrates how nativist language—married to populist politics—became increasingly influential in Israeli politics and led to the formation of a new Right that brings together supporters of the Likud Party (secularists and *masortiim*, who are attached to the religious tradition), individuals from the geographic and socioeconomic periphery, new Russian immigrants, religious Zionists, and the ultra-Orthodox community.

Nativism in Israeli politics was and is intertwined with two critical developments. First is a fierce attack against the elite, especially against the judicial system and the High Court, the universities, the intellectuals, and the media. Second is a covert and overt animosity toward Palestinians (and foreign workers and refugees).

Palestinians who are citizens of Israel are put on the defensive, with some of their rights curtailed and their loyalty to the state continuously being questioned. Israeli nativism has affected Palestinians in the West Bank even more, legitimizing not only the occupation but the settlement activity there, making it seem natural and just. Nativism implies that politics is about the assertion of Jewish power and about rendering Jewish the space in any territory that the State of Israel controls.

The successful operations of both the network and the nativist ideology have depended upon the weakness of the Israeli state. The lack of coordination among governmental departments, the numerous legal gray zones and unwillingness to enforce laws, the inadequate supervision of state funds, the entrusting of responsibilities and powers to non-governmental organizations, and other factors have allowed the network ample room to maneuver. Without state resources and backing, settlements would have been few; with a well-organized, hierarchical state, the settlers’ manipulations would have been difficult. Equally problematic is the fact that the Israeli government’s bureaucracy is not autonomous but is subject to the interests of the Jewish

majority; it has not developed a solid equalitarian ethos in matters as diverse as housing plans and the creation of industrial parks. The state apparatus has not served as a bulwark against nativist ideology.

While the overall picture Pedahzur portrays is convincing (though at times one-sided, ignoring, for example, efforts by recent Israeli governments of the Right to integrate Arab citizens into the labor market), there are a few significant omissions in his discussion. A recent report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), for instance, found that Israel has the highest percentage of poor people among the countries in this organization (13.8% in 1995; 20.9% in 2010). The disparity in wealth distribution is also among the highest in the OECD, and more than a third of the children are poor. Put differently, the dramatic rise of neoliberalism and the weakening of the Israeli welfare state have left many individuals and families vulnerable and their bond to society weak. The leaders who initiated these economic processes, particularly Benjamin Netanyahu, also championed the nativist language to generate Jewish solidarity at times of great socioeconomic distress. Yet Pedahzur does not examine the complex interplay of the economic and political spheres in the rise of the new, radical Right.

Since its inception, moreover, Zionism has been attracted to and has measured its success in light of tangible changes in the phenomenal world: the size of its Jewish population, the extent of the territory controlled by Jews, the houses constructed, and roads paved. Zionism has focused more on palpable nation building and less on what it means to dwell in the house it has built. Israel does not have a constitution or other canonical texts that articulate what it is about and that could serve as a common foundation for political conversation. More generally, it has not developed a clear vision of its moral ideas, democratic principles, notions of citizenship, and the ends to be accomplished as a community. There are understandable reasons for this neglect. But the point is that the settlers—and their celebration of place and land—have succeeded in hijacking Israeli politics only because there was and is a feeble Israeli countervision and because of the passivity of the majority of Israelis, whose notions of citizenship do not entail the active guarding of democratic principles. There is no substantial, political-intellectual tradition to oppose the settlers’ tangibly oriented politics, which has strong Zionist roots.

Finally, Pedahzur’s discussion of nativism and settlement would have benefited from perspectives found in the theoretical literature on colonialism. Hannah Arendt is particularly germane, since (in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [1951]) she suggests that nation-states that embark on colonial projects are destined to encounter a grave dilemma: They embody the notions of popular sovereignty, national self-determination, and the equality of the nation’s members, yet they deny these very same notions

to the people they dominate, while unable and unwilling to integrate the latter into their own political body. To overcome this betrayal of their own founding ideas, they find (often racial) reasons for legitimizing their superiority and for judging the colonized to be inferior. Pedahzur believes that ethnic democracy “serves as an ideal habitat for the growth of . . . right-wing radicalism” (p. 29), and perhaps he is correct. The rise of Israeli nativism, however, is less about the nature of ethnic democracy and more about the nature of colonialism: It is the rule rather than the exception. This nativism will begin to evaporate only when the settlement project comes to an end; so far, however, it is the fuel propelling that project forward.

Party Politics and Economic Reform in Africa’s Democracies. By M. Anne Pitcher. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 328p. \$99.00 cloth, \$29.99 paper.
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— Adrienne LeBas, *American University*

In the past two decades, many countries in the developing world have undertaken an array of economic reforms, including privatization of state-owned assets, commercialization of services, and financial market liberalization. But there is often a gap between governments’ initial commitments to reform and actual implementation. Especially in sub-Saharan Africa, many reforms have been partial or manipulated, and liberalization has generated robust private-sector development or increased investment in only a small number of cases. In order to understand the outcomes of reform, there is a need to better understand the politics of implementation. Anne Pitcher’s *Party Politics and Economic Reform in Africa’s Democracies* is a valuable contribution to this endeavor.

Like much of the literature, Pitcher’s book rightly places the emphasis on the complicated bargaining that reform provokes; however, it also underlines the importance of the institutional framework within which bargaining occurs. Pitcher argues that domestic formal institutions play a central role in mediating bargaining and thereby shaping the path from formal government commitments to concrete implementation. She places particular emphasis on the nature of the party system, a factor that is often neglected in Africa and other parts of the developing world. For Pitcher, the weak and fluid party systems common in new democracies magnify the impact of government discretion, making reform less credible. While slightly stronger party systems increase the degree of reform implementation, they also color its content, making outcomes more partisan or more marked by “winners” and “losers.” According to the author, it is only in countries with strong party systems and constraints on discretionary authority that reform implementation is able to properly balance societal demands. In addition to case studies of Mozambique, South Africa,

and Zambia, the book relies on new data on reform commitments and implementation in a set of 27 African countries.

The first few chapters set up a number of questions about economic reforms aimed at private-sector development. How much variation is there in African governments’ formal commitment to privatization and property rights reform? How big is the gap between formal commitment and implementation? Are particular reforms more likely to be implemented than others? For instance, are we more likely to see progress on privatization, while regulatory reform and commercialization of services lag behind? Finally, what explains variation in the character and extent of implementation? In order to tackle this diverse set of questions, Pitcher adopts a tiered research design. She takes an initial look at the gap between commitment and implementation with her full set of 27 cases, then examines the effect of party systems on this gap using a more limited set of nine cases, and then uses in-depth case studies of three countries to more fully elaborate the links between party system and processes of reform.

Pitcher’s argument hinges on the interaction between two different elements of the institutional context. First of all, she argues that governments with significant discretionary authority are less likely to successfully implement their initial reform commitments. Discretionary authority seems to be partly determined by the content of the government’s initial “motivational commitments”: Where assurances of property rights are built into constitutions, or where independent agencies have been established to undertake privatization, governments “tie their hands” in terms of implementation. At other points, however, the quality of democracy—operationalized via Freedom House scores—seems to serve as a stand-in for this idea of discretionary constraint. Secondly, Pitcher argues that party systems serve as important vehicles through which demands are filtered and accountability enforced. This is a more novel argument, especially in the African context. She suggests that stronger or less fluid party systems discipline governments: They force governments to listen to the demands of different constituencies and to undertake reform in a way that balances diverse societal interests.

This research design is the book’s strength and its greatest weakness. The new data on reform commitment and implementation in sub-Saharan Africa is a significant advance on existing World Bank data, which uses blunter measures and contains a good deal of missing data. Pitcher constructs two new indices of motivational commitment and reform attainment, the latter of which she terms “imperative commitment.” This data source will be of great use to future researchers and is a significant contribution. Unfortunately, the quantitative analysis remains underdeveloped, and she misses an opportunity to take full advantage of the novel data she has collected.