

has been said about the arrangements among nonstate armed actors, and the limited research on this subject tends to focus on where and when alliances emerge. This book provides many interesting examples of how these groups interact between these poles. In addition, the work contributes to the rebel governance literature by uncovering new circumstances under which governance relationships emerge that do not necessarily depend on the predominance of one group. The fieldwork that Idler conducted is careful, and her commitment to telling the stories of often-marginalized communities is a contribution in itself.

These strengths would be even more forceful if the book resolved two outstanding issues. One question is how the clusters and the arrangements within them relate to one another. To make an obvious pun, the borders between these concepts and their empirical instances remain fuzzy. I was not sure how to classify an alliance as tactical or strategic or how to identify peaceful coexistence compared to strategic alliances. Idler writes that the clusters constitute order, but it was not always clear how durable each instance was. If these are empirically and conceptually important relationships, it would be helpful to have the tools to tell them apart from one another, to identify where and when they exist elsewhere, and when they transform into a new type of relationship.

A second question relates to the importance of the setting. The book claims that borderlands are special both because of their transnational character and their distance from seats of political power. Yet much of what Idler describes, such as enmity between groups, strategic alliances, and shadow governance, is found in areas of Colombia far from the borders, as she notes at various points. As a result, the ways that the borderlands differ from the interior are often elided. To me, two distinctions stand out. First, illicit commodities tend to have huge price jumps at the border. How does this change the nature of the relationships between the nonstate armed groups at the borders compared to how they relate in the interior, at earlier points in the supply chain? Should we expect a higher prevalence of tactical and strategic alliances in borderlands than in the interior? Second, borders are also unique because they are points where neighboring state authorities could also cooperate or compete. Under what conditions should we expect them to do so? Does enmity, rivalry, and friendship also describe the relationships of cross-border state authorities? And how do these relationships among state actors influence violent nonstate groups and civilians?

Idler provides a window into the lives of civilians who negotiate incredibly difficult situations, into the diversity of relationships among violent nonstate groups, and into regions typically left on the margins. In the process, her

work raises new and important questions about civil wars and criminal conflict.

State Expansion and Conflict: In and Between Israel/Palestine and Lebanon. By Oren Barak. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, 292p. \$105.00 cloth.
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Oren Barak's latest volume takes the unusual step of engaging in a comparative study of Israel and Lebanon through the prism of state formation and expansion. Although some elements of this analysis have appeared in, for example, the work of Joel Migdal, especially his (1988) *Strong Societies and Weak States* on which this volume draws and from whom a prominent endorsement appears on the back cover, this remains a rare and valuable approach that unearths some fruitful similarities and provokes many stimulating thoughts. Like most good ideas, it appears to be both obvious and is deceptively simple. In many ways the book seems to form the final part of a loose trilogy that Professor Barak has published over the past decade. It began with his 2009 study, *The Lebanese Army: A National Institution in a Divided Society*, and was followed in 2013 by *Israel's Security Networks: A Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, coauthored with Gabriel Sheffer. The influence of those two volumes is readily apparent here, but the ideas are combined and tested to produce something that really helps draw out both similarities and differences and highlights key path dependencies affecting the two states. The slightly clunky title nevertheless reveals the richness of the volume and highlights the key goals of the book: to explore how the state formation and consolidation processes, which were effectively parallel for most of the twentieth century and which should have led to small but secure ethnoreligious states, were corrupted by processes of state expansion into lands containing other ethnic or religious groups, which fundamentally altered the political and security realities of the states in question.

Barak deliberately frames Israel as Israel/Palestine to reinforce the intertwined nature of the two polities, especially the de facto expansion of Israel and all of the demographic and security threats this has brought to Israel's status as both a Jewish and a democratic state. This framing, of course, makes a great deal of sense and is essential for the book, although it does create a small element of dissonance for those of us used to thinking in terms of the Israel/Palestine conflict and a two-state solution. The problem is that it is difficult to think of an alternative phraseology that fully captures the importance of the changes that the occupation of the West Bank in particular have brought for Israeli politics and society and

that, given demographic trends, seem likely to only worsen. One might suggest Muammar Gaddafi's famous "Isratine," but that of course reflected a proposed one-state solution, although it does have the benefit of demonstrating the realities of the deep interconnections and impacts of the occupation on Israel. Once one has forced oneself not to automatically think of the conflict and the two-state solution, the mental wall is broken, and the book's detailed treatment of the challenges caused to Israel by the occupation is very well handled.

After a preface and introduction that together frame the book nicely by both explaining the genesis of the volume and its context in the wider literature, Barak begins with a discussion of state expansion in general: he draws on examples from across the globe, usefully situating ideas within wider literatures on, for example, intercommunal and ethnic violence, security and strategy, and state formation. This material also introduces the book's tripartite framing of core foci in terms of the relationship between the state, community, and security, which is explained clearly and used consistently throughout the volume. This is a very useful construct that facilitates engagement with multiple levels of analysis and generates some fascinating insights, especially in the book's second half. At times, however, this relationship does feel a little undertheorized, perhaps needing to go a bit beyond Migdal and notions of strong and weak states to more fully create a framework that can capture the complexities of relationships and interdependencies. Having said that, the framing of the state formation process through processes of state building, state construction, and national integration was very well done, and the two elements combined do offer real value.

This first chapter begins with a fascinating example of the influence of maps on identity (p. 17). The anecdote concerns the advertising campaign of an Israeli coffee chain named *Cofizz*, which published a map of its branch locations under the slogan, "We have expanded for your comfort," apparently presenting Israel as being within its 1967 borders, leaving out the West Bank and the Golan Heights. This prompted a public outcry, and the chain was forced to issue a lengthy apology. It defended itself by saying that the error was accidental and that "the owners of the studio which had drawn the map had themselves originated from the [Occupied] Territories" (p. 17). Needless to say the map was replaced with one that included not just annexed and occupied land but also the Gaza Strip, which had of course been "evacuated" in 2005. This anecdote gets across the complex, multifaceted, multilayered, and profound impacts that state expansion can have on a society and its political discourse, an expansion that the book demonstrates has actually seemingly been better handled, remarkably, in Lebanon than in Israel.

This reality is (partly) pointed out in the titles of the third and fourth chapters: "Lebanon: Weak and Legitimate" and "Israel/Palestine: Strong and Illegitimate." These chapters are rich in detail and focus on explaining the stories of the process and impacts of state expansion in both states. Although experts are unlikely to learn much new from these chapters, their framing is crucial to the book, and they provide superb summaries that will be of real use in teaching because they synthesize the literature well and make the complex stories accessible and engaging. Before these two fairly lengthy individual chapters, there is a short chapter that offers some useful general comparisons between the two cases and specifically the processes through which they expanded. Chapter 5 is a direct comparison and draws effectively on the previous discussions, using the tripartite structure of state, community, and security to demonstrate why, in both cases and despite major traumas for the leading ethnic groups, attempts to retreat from the expansion of the state into more tightly defined nation-states have been thwarted.

In its final two chapters the book explores the history of relations between the two states and their leading communities (Maronites and Jews), focusing on the deterioration in relations caused by the expansions and changes in politics on both sides. The sixth chapter draws well on recent IR trends that demonstrate that the actions and identity of others outside the state can have significant impacts on events and processes within a state. In its final chapter, the story of the intertwined nature of the two states is brought into the more recent era through an examination of the period from 1977 to 2006. What is especially good about this chapter is that it does not get too bogged down in the usual military operations, but instead explores their connections to significant changes within both countries and their shifting perceptions of each other. Throughout this impeccably researched book there is a desire to go beyond the usual materials and to draw on different sources in a range of languages, including some interesting discussions on the role of key films in highlighting and influencing some of these dynamics, which is a promising addition and brings further interest and originality to the book.

In sum then, this is a very good volume indeed that forces reflection, brings together a range of ideas from both IR and comparative politics, and does so in a readable and engaging manner. One of the many contributions of this volume is to move away from the generally *sui generis* manner in which Israel is often treated in the literature, as being some kind of Western outpost in the Middle East. Instead it shows that Israel is much more like the states that surround it than people generally like to recognize. In this way (among others) the book offers a powerful jolt to the reader and will, one hopes, encourage further study of the ways in which the occupation is changing Israeli society and generate

additional comparative studies concerning Israel and its neighbors.

Parliaments in Time: The Evolution of Legislative Democracy in Western Europe, 1866–2015. By Michael Koß.

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At the most basic level, the goal of *Parliaments in Time: The Evolution of Legislative Democracy* is to explain the differentiated development of “talking” and “working” parliaments within the context of Western Europe between 1866 and 2015; it does so through an analysis of internal institutional (procedural) reforms affecting the centralization of agenda-setting powers and the strength of committees. This relatively straightforward goal belies a complex research agenda that requires concept creation/reconceptualization, theory building, and in-depth archival work. In the end, the book contributes a great deal to current understandings of the causes and consequences of the internal institutional development of legislatures. As with most substantial research initiatives, however, there are also some questions left underanalyzed and some methodological choices left unexplained. These do not undermine the value of the book, but rather suggest future opportunities to adapt and extend the theoretical insights it introduces.

The central methodological approach employed is historical institutionalism examining critical junctures at which key decisions are made about the internal procedures that structure parliamentary activity. By proactively integrating time into his analysis, Michael Koß is able to begin with parliaments in a “legislative state of nature” in which agenda control is decentralized (not in the hands of the government) and committees are weak or nonexistent (see figure 2.1, p. 25). However, as democracy progresses and legislative workloads increase, legislatures are placed under pressure. They must reform their internal structures to accommodate the increased workload and create procedural efficiencies. Legislators are trapped in the Weberian “steel hard casing” that forces decisions about how to rationalize the functioning of the parliament to meet the challenges posed by an increased workload. For Koß there are two choices: (1) increase the centralization of agenda control to expand the power of the government by creating one committee of “mega-seats” (the cabinet), leaving committees in the parliament either weak or nonexistent, or (2) increase the power of committees (many mega-seats) paired with decentralized agenda control. The former strategy leads to talking parliaments, whereas the latter results in working parliaments. There is also the possibility of “hybrid” parliaments that combine strong committees with centralized agenda control. These are understood as

efforts by leaders to mitigate obstructive opposition; however, they are broadly similar to talking parliaments, because the leaders still maintain agenda control.

This general framework reflects much of the existing literature in terms of the characterization of parliaments and the impact of agenda control and strong committees. Koß’s key question is why would numerically dominant parliamentary “followers” ever agree to procedural reforms that transform the legislature from the state of nature to a talking parliament. Why would members of the parliament agree (voluntarily) to cede power to the “leaders” (government)? Although existing explanations for the transformation of parliaments and parliamentary power (particularly in the European context) tend to focus on political parties as explanatory variables, Koß instead argues that internal procedural reforms within parliaments that centralize power and shift them toward “talking parliaments” are motivated by a desire to protect legislative democracy from the threat of anti-systemic actors within the legislature who threaten its capacity to manage the increased workload. In that sense, the goal of the book is “to examine not only why legislatures develop towards the talking or working ideal type, but also how legislative democracy is maintained—and under which conditions it fails” (p. 3). This theory is couched as a *replacement* for existing explanations, rather than an alternative that may be an improvement in some instances.

To support his theoretical insights, Koß gathers detailed information on the lower legislative chamber in four cases: the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Sweden. Chapter 4 provides a brief overview of the development of the parliament and some characteristics of the party system in each case. The remainder of the book provides more detailed analyses of each of 90 examples of attempted reforms to agenda control and committee power, with particular emphasis on the context, the role of anti-system actors, and the character of the proposed reform. The analysis is divided into three chronological periods, emphasizing the path dependency of the initial formative movement away from the parliamentary state of nature. The histories presented are detailed and informative, providing careful discussion of both successful and failed reforms.

Despite this attention to detail, the methodological choices are not fully justified at times. Nowhere is this more evident than in the initial selection of cases (chap. 3) and the discussion of other European cases in the conclusion (chap. 8). Although initially “small” countries and countries that have had lapses in democratic governance for two decades or more are excluded from the case studies (without any definition or substantive justification; p. 65), in the conclusion some of these countries (Ireland, Greece, Italy, and Spain) are discussed in an effort to demonstrate the *universality* of the core theory. As Koß notes, these are the cases that initially do not appear to fit the expectations of the model, including examples of