

courses on precolonial statehood and decentralization, respectively. Chapters 4 through 8 provide empirical evidence for the book's central argument using a wide variety of data sources and research designs. Chapter 4 elucidates the challenges and constraints faced by local leaders; chapter 5 documents the differences in public goods distribution as a function of local governments' congruence (or not) with precolonial states; chapter 6 leverages three in-depth case studies to highlight the theory's mechanisms; chapter 7 shows that precolonial statehood only matters for distributive outcomes after decentralization; and chapter 8 extends the analysis beyond Senegal to include 11 additional West African countries. The brief conclusion then discusses the implications of the book's findings for decentralization policies more broadly.

These chapters are combined into a beautifully written and effectively organized book, which expertly weaves together theory, social science, and narrative to provide the reader with a window into local politics and decision making in Senegal. The book also offers a master class in marrying sophisticated theorization with deep, fieldwork-based research. The result is a dizzying array of original data sources, all closely linked to the theoretical framework. The original data sources include more than 500 formal interviews, a survey with more than 350 rural elites, network data on elite social connections, and firsthand observations in three local governments. Wilfahrt also compiled geolocated administrative data on public goods provision and local representation across Senegalese local governments since 2002 and archival data on public goods provision from the 1880s to the present. She also used archival data to produce a map of the capitals of Senegambia's precolonial kingdoms and used reasonable buffers around those capitals to identify the extent of their territorial reach. Wilfahrt's adept use of so many different original data sources, both qualitative and quantitative, makes her book a model of the best kind of careful, fieldwork-intensive research to which we should all aspire.

She also makes theoretical contributions to several different literatures, which are often not in conversation with each other. First, Wilfahrt's book contributes to the growing research on the long-run consequences of early statehood. Within this literature, Wilfahrt makes two advances. Unlike much of the work in this area, she identifies the specific mechanisms through which precolonial statehood affects outcomes today—place-based identities and supra-local social networks—both of which she shows are contingent on demographic stability and local social hierarchies. She also advances this literature by demonstrating that the effect of spatial congruence with long-dead states is conditional on the nature of contemporary political institutions: Precolonial statehood only affects local political outcomes after Senegal decentralizes decision making to local governments. Second, Wilfahrt's book contributes to the study of decentralization and local governance by

identifying the conditions under which it “works” well. In so doing, she opens the black box of local government, highlighting the crucial role of intraelite relations and how they are structured by historical exposure to statehood. Her key insight—that precolonial statehood left constellations of social ties that constrain political opportunism—is likely to travel beyond her particular case. Finally, while less central to the thrust of her book, Wilfahrt also contributes to the study of identity in African politics through her focus on supraethnic place-based identities, and to the long-standing debate about the degree to which colonial rule disrupted politics on the continent through her careful documentation of how local social institutions survived French colonialism.

Like all great books, Wilfahrt's also raises important questions for future research. For one, more could be done to separate the effect of precolonial centralization from the factors that drove such centralization. Wilfahrt is largely silent on why some areas of precolonial Senegal were politically centralized and others were not. As a result, readers are likely to wonder whether certain geographic or demographic factors—such as population density or subsistence strategy—could be driving both precolonial statehood and present-day local social relations. Wilfahrt addresses this possibility through an “off-the-line” case study in chapter 6, showing that precolonial statehood does not affect contemporary outcomes in one locality where migration has disrupted the persistence of social hierarchies. While this case provides compelling initial evidence that it is indeed precolonial statehood (and the stability of its population's descendants) that is shaping cooperative social institutions today, it will be important to show that this generalizes beyond a single case. In addition, future research should consider how the varied institutions of precolonial polities gave rise to different social structures. Chapter 2 characterizes Senegal's precolonial states as sharing many features, including ethnic diversity, salient social caste, elective monarchy, and tribute-based political hierarchies. But those polities must have also varied in meaningful ways—and there is undoubtedly even more variation if we consider polities across the continent. Such variation in the formal institutions comprising precolonial states is likely consequential for the type of legacies they leave for local governance today.

The Cycle of Coalition: How Parties and Voters Interact under Coalition Governance. By David Fortunato. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 225p. \$99.99 cloth.
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In April 2015, six months before the upcoming Canadian parliamentary elections, Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party and the incumbent Conservatives were neck and neck in

the opinion polls, with the New Democratic Party polling as the third party. The only feasible option to remove the Conservative government from office at the time seemed to be a coalition government of the Liberals and New Democrats. Yet, on April 14, Trudeau came out and said: "The fact is, I'm opposed to coalitions." In the end, he was able to form a single-party majority government following the 2015 election. Still, the question many pundits asked at the time was why exactly he was so against a coalition government, which seemed like the only potential option to remove the Conservative Party from office. David Fortunato provides us with a convincing answer for Trudeau's behavior: Coalitions are risky; voters dislike compromise; collective cabinet responsibility makes it hard to show the differences between partners; and if they fail to show how they are different from their partners to voters, and if voters believe that the parties are failing to follow through on their campaign promises due to their compromising behavior, then they lose support.

Surprisingly, the literature on how coalitions and coalitional behavior affect public opinion and political behavior was largely untapped for a long time, despite the prevalence of coalitions across parliamentary democracies. While the questions of why certain coalitions form and how long they stay in office has received a great deal of attention, the voter-coalition connection was missing, save the seminal work of Lanny Martin and Georg Vanberg. Fortunato builds on Martin and Vanberg's work and brings a breath of fresh air to this limited literature with a compelling argument about the problems of coalition compromise through cross-national analyses, survey experiments, and a case study of the United Kingdom's unique coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

Fortunato's cycle of coalitions theory has multiple parts that connect coalition parties' behavior with voters' perceptions and electoral behavior. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the voter level. First, Fortunato argues that voters do not like compromise and perceive compromising coalition parties as incompetent and acting against their brand. The survey experimental results from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in chapter 4 show that voters presented with compromising coalition parties are less likely to believe that the governing parties represent their supporters and more likely to think that the parties are ideologically similar. Fortunato then supplements these experimental results with panel data from Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden in chapter 5, demonstrating that perceived government compromise (i.e., reduced perceived distance between coalition partners) negatively affects incumbent electoral support.

Chapters 6–8, then, move the focus to party strategies: What should coalition partners do to mitigate these losses for perceived compromise, and do the strategies work?

One crucial feature of coalition governments that artificially increases the compromising image of political parties is the collective cabinet responsibility, which stipulates that "all members of government are expected to support all government decisions and cloister any discord between member parties and individual ministers" (p. 93). Hence, the ability of coalition parties to go against their partners and show voters their uncompromising behavior is limited. Given the findings in chapters 4 and 5, we know that perceived compromise is risky. How, then, can political parties show their unique brands and competence as governing parties? Fortunato argues that the only legislative period when coalition parties can express their differences from their partners and save their brands is during the legislative review phase of the policy-making process, which kicks in when a policy proposal is submitted to the parliament and concludes with its final vote. Using an impressive dataset of legislative scrutiny of cabinet proposals in Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands over several decades, chapter 6 shows that the more similarly a pair of cabinet parties is perceived, the more they will amend the legislative proposals.

The findings of this chapter then lead to chapters 7 and 8, in which, with a case study of the United Kingdom's 2010–15 coalition government and with a cross-national analysis of media-reported compromise and conflict, Fortunato shows when the strategy fails and works for electoral outcomes, respectively. Chapter 7 unpacks the UK Liberal Democrats' behavior in the parliament through their legislative amendments and parliamentary speeches during the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition government. Fortunato shows that the Liberal Democrats failed to differentiate themselves from the Conservatives, which he concludes is a potential reason why the Liberal Democrats suffered electorally in 2015. Chapter 8 then uses a dataset collected by Simon Weschle on the media reporting of coalition conflict and compromise across 13 countries between 2001 and 2014. The findings suggest that strategic differentiation of parties from their partners, as reported by the media, mitigates the electoral losses due to perceived compromise. Fortunato concludes the book with a "pushing forward" chapter, which provides exciting new avenues for coalitional research. It is an important chapter for all interested in coalitional politics and voter behavior.

The Cycle of Coalition is a must-read book connecting the institutions of coalition governments and parliaments with the perceptions and behavior of voters in parliamentary democracies. Fortunato skillfully takes the reader through tough questions to answer, and provides convincing and clear evidence using impressive data. Yet, some questions are still left open and await scholarly attention.

First, to keep the analyses simple, Fortunato misses an opportunity to differentiate between and theorize about

the different parties of coalition governments. Are voters more likely to punish junior partners or the senior prime ministerial parties for their compromising behavior? Does it matter on which issues the compromise is perceived and which party owns the issue? In addition, related to the party strategies, which parties in the government should use the legislative period more strategically? Chapter 7 suggests that the junior coalition partner (in this case, Liberal Democrats) that fails to use the legislative scrutiny gets punished in elections. Is this a generalizable argument to all coalition partners? If so, why did the Conservatives win the majority in 2015 despite both parties' lack of differentiating behavior?

Second, Fortunato assumes that all coalition partners are different and need to show their differences to protect their brand. However, a green and social-democratic coalition government differs from a social democratic and Christian democratic grand coalition in terms of the ideological distances between coalition partners. One may argue that voters do not need to see the differentiating behavior, and compromise might be less consequential for coalitions with ideologically similar political parties. Yet, one may also argue that ideologically different parties in a grand coalition do not need to work as hard to differentiate themselves given that voters likely already see them as diverse as possible.

None of these comments takes away from the critical contributions that *The Cycle of Coalition* makes, and all these questions should encourage other scholars to take the work presented here forward. I am confident that we will see more work connecting coalition behavior with public opinion soon, and the role of *The Cycle of Coalition* in this literature will be impressive.

The Contemporary Middle East in an Age of Upheaval.

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Generational shocks that upend the perceived stability of entire regions catalyze a curious trend in political science scholarship. They shatter old assumptions and realign intellectual priorities, but they also elicit cottage industries of edited volumes devoted to exploring the postshock era of those regions. The collapse of the Soviet Union induced a decade of anthologies about post-Communist democratization, for instance; the 1997 Asian financial crisis produced countless compilations about shifting state-business relations in East and Southeast Asia. Such digests allow regional specialists to present research in bite-sized chapters, giving more freedom than journal-style articles to play with new ideas and propose new hypotheses. Yet

for that reason, they also often sound more like a cacophony of dissonant observations, and struggle to deliver a unifying theoretical punch that explains rather than describes the new regional terrain.

Enter this edited volume by James Gelvin. This book reflects well how scholars of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have grappled with the monumental events of 2011–12 known as the Arab uprisings, or the Arab Spring. The wave of revolutionary contestation unleashed in those years challenged authoritarian regimes and state institutions, transformed civil societies and social movements, and created new geopolitical patterns partly fueled by a corollary upsurge of armed conflicts in Libya, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. For the past decade, those uprisings have been the periodizing benchmark for almost all edited political science volumes about the MENA. There are many—by my count, nearly four dozen from major English-language trade presses and academic publishers since 2011–12—and they converge upon an increasingly tired trope. There was the Arab world before the Arab Spring and there is the Arab world after, and the latter is decidedly gloomier: There is less economic justice and more violent conflict, and simultaneously most dictatorships are not only still standing but even more ruthless.

The Contemporary Middle East, however, is among the best of this bunch. It has two manifest strengths. First, it begins with some interesting, identifiable themes. In his introductory chapter, Gelvin sets the tone—most Arab dictatorships still suffer from a “crisis of legitimacy,” and outside of Tunisia remain as repressive as ever against popular protests and contentious politics (p. 8)—and from there posits five other post-Arab Spring shifts to nudge the reader along the analytical pathway set by the book. The MENA has experienced more sectarianized conflict, more malleable state sovereignty, more Saudi–Iranian competition, less American hegemony, and less fixation on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Not all these themes percolate to the subsequent 14 chapters—the Israeli–Palestinian factor, for example, is barely mentioned at all—but they still leave the reader with an important point: Domestic politics in the MENA remains indissolubly linked to regional dynamics and the international system; indeed, we cannot explain internal changes without attending to the external context. Perhaps this explains why, as well, the MENA has been periodized repeatedly such that any given year feels like a “post”-shock aftermath. In the 1990s, scholars wrote about the post–Cold War landscape; in the 2000s, they evaluated the post-9/11 or post–Iraq War epoch; and now, they must engage the post–Arab Spring era. “When it comes to dividing history into periods based on one or another characteristic,” Gelvin muses, “possibilities are limited only by the imaginations of historians” (p. 7).

What, then, makes the post–Arab Spring age theoretically interesting? Here, the book's second strength shines