number of sources and to drama over analysis. Chapters 5 and 6 describe the increasing role of public relations agencies and agents in state institutions and civil society organizations, as well as journalists' preferences for working with public relations agents. This communication strategy produces quick and ready-made messages that focus on crime, insecurity, and the call for immediate action, which are easy to use by journalists and easy to consume by the general public, rather than long-term policies. This strategy, Bonner claims, favors the development of punitive populism.

Bonner's book provides an important contribution to our attempts to understand the rise of punitive populism in Latin America. The literature has rarely addressed the role played by mass media in this process. This book brings the media to the forefront of the debate and examines in greater detail the detrimental effects of neoliberalism and market logics on democracy. Neoliberalism is not only an economic policy, but it is also a way of governing populations (Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller, eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* 1991; David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 2005). Neoliberalism produces a hegemonic discourse that sees social problems as individual failures, attempts to eliminate or reduce state responsibility, and favors the tightening of social control as a way of maintaining the social order. Tough-on-crime policies have been central in enforcing this neoliberal order (David Garland, *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society,* 2001; Jonathan Simon, *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear,* 2007). The mass media preference for punitive voices and the dramatization of crime is not only a response to market needs, but it is also part of the construction and maintenance of a hegemonic discourse. This discourse has at its center the promotion of specific policing strategies, such as "Broken Windows," packaged under the rubric of community policing, which have little community empowerment and too much policing, thereby diminishing the quality of democracy. Although this book could have benefited from a deeper discussion on the construction of this hegemony, Bonner nonetheless makes a very important contribution by showing how legal and institutional guarantees of a free press are not enough if the market and media system promote practices that limit the media's role in fostering democracy.

The Politics of the Core Leader in China: Culture, Institution, Legitimacy, and Power. By Xuezhi Guo. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 434p. $120.00 cloth.
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As President Xi Jinping continues to consolidate personal control over the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and other autocratic strongmen are becoming more assertive around the globe, scholars and policy makers are seeking to better understand the nature and roots of one-man rule in the modern era. Guo Xuezhi's *The Politics of the Core Leader in China*, which is about the role of the party leader in the CCP and how it has evolved, is a timely and useful study. Guo proposes a conceptual framework in which China's political system, infused with Confucian and Communist traditions, "desires" a strong, competent, and moral leader who thereby "earns" the title of "core" leader (pp. 1–3). Not all party leaders can attain this status, however, so there is a cycle of strong and weak collective leadership in a "self-regulating, adjusting" system (p. 14). Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping were core leaders, and Xi Jinping is one today. But other party leaders, including Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, did not make the cut, Guo argues.

In its substantive chapters, the book provides cogent explanations of numerous key concepts, institutions, and trends in elite Chinese politics. Chapter 1 reviews various models and approaches that other scholars have applied to the topic, especially to the question of succession. Chapter 2 highlights four "enduring structural factors" that shape elite politics: gerontocracy or "mentor politics," meritocracy, factionalism, and the "tendency toward the 'core' leadership" (pp. 80, 24). Chapter 3 stresses the lasting influence of Confucianism and other imperial traditions. Chapter 4 discusses the CCP's ideologies, institutions, and norms with a focus on the formal thought of the major party leaders. Chapter 5 is about groupings in Chinese politics: Guo distinguishes among identity groups, such as the Communist Youth League; factions, such as the Jiang Zemin faction; and cliques, which are like factions except they are more horizontally organized and not necessarily political. Chapter 6 focuses on the history of the core leader, which I return to shortly. And chapter 7 presents three case studies of elite opposition to core leaders: the Gao-Rao affair in 1953, the Gang of Four and its fall in 1976, and resistance to Xi's rise since 2012. Throughout, Guo displays a wealth of detailed knowledge about relevant people, organizations, and events.

Guo's conceptual framework for elite Chinese politics provides both a ready-made answer to the question of why Xi has become such a powerful leader and the historical context for understanding such a development. The story goes something like this: Xi's predecessor, Hu, was a weak leader under whom China experienced a "lost decade" of corruption and social discontent. Party elites were therefore compelled to choose a strong successor who would amass formal and informal powers and use them to lead bold reforms. The Chinese political system requires a strong leader to be effective, and most Chinese people, following Confucianism and other cultural traditions, care

more about a leader's performance in office than how he or she came to power or other procedural niceties. These views about the normalcy—and even necessity—of a nearly "all-powerful" leader (p. 1) suggest that Guo would agree with Joseph Fewsmith rather than Andrew Nathan that the CCP's supposed institutionalization and shift to collective leadership in recent decades have been mostly superficial ("Authoritarian Resilience Revisited: Joseph Fewsmith with Response from Andrew J. Nathan," *Journal of Contemporary China*, 28(116), 2019).

Although there is some truth to the idea that strong autocratic leaders can champion reforms or even create revolutionary change, the book's proposed framework is at times unclear or inconsistent. For instance, Guo does not explain who decides if and how a party leader qualifies as a core leader. Sometimes the decision seems to be made by the party—which itself is not a monolith—but at other times it is clearly made by the author himself. For example, party leaders designated Jiang Zemin as the core leader in the 1990s, but Guo rejects this designation (p. 61). Guo's criteria for core-ness are also subjective. Did Mao really govern better than Jiang did? Guo himself admits, "Commanding the party during the eras of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao required a political skillset unlike that of Mao and Deng" (p. 200). Moreover, core-ness conflates a leader's political success, governance competence, morality, charisma, and other traits, skating over the fact that these characteristics have often been at odds (p. 112). If virtuous strongman rule is the "ideal" in Chinese political thought, then why before 2015 was it so common to hear arguments that collective leadership was one of the keys to the CCP's success (e.g., Hu Angang, *China's Collective Leadership*, 2015)? Surely many sophisticated Chinese thinkers can distinguish between powerful leaders and good ones.

Partly as a result of these problems, the book's framework fails to explain why some Chinese leaders have become core leaders and others have not. The observation that party elites will crowd in with collective leadership or factionalism if a party leader is weak is not evidence of a cyclical and self-regulating political system but rather a truism (p. 13). Guo claims that the CCP leadership was "forced" to choose a strong leader in Xi and that Xi's consolidation of power "is not surprising" (pp. 4, 48). But then why did the far greater crisis of 1989 not force such a decision as well with Jiang's appointment (p. 204)? And was Xi's personalization of power really so predictable? Some experienced China watchers predicted that Xi would be a weak leader who would have to make compromises (e.g., Cheng Li, "The Powerful Factions among China's Rulers," *Brookings*, 2012). The alleged causal logic is further obscured by Guo's anthropomorphizing of the political system. It is unclear who exactly is doing what and why it is the "system" itself that supposedly "fears chaos," "desires" a strong leader, and "grants permission" to the party leader to develop a faction (pp. 282, 283, 261). Finally, by repeatedly stating that core status is "earned," Guo risks giving the misleading impression that elite Chinese politics is some form of moral meritocracy, as opposed to a largely amoral power struggle (pp. 3, 13, 79). It is doubtful, for example, that it was conservative Chen Yun's "unselfish moral personality that most compelled other high-ranking leaders to follow and support him" (p. 127). Whatever its strengths, Chen's morality did not prevent Mao from politically isolating him in the late 1950s.

Despite these critiques, I recommend that China scholars read and engage with Guo's study for two reasons. First, it is chock-full of useful information and analysis on everything from the ancient origins of the mentor system to the political behavior of princelings. Second and more importantly, Guo's framework for understanding elite Chinese politics articulates a real and influential—though far from the only—perspective on leadership in Chinese political thought. In sum, this book makes a contribution but also leaves room for further penetrating research on the topic of elite Chinese politics.

LGBTI Rights in Turkey: Sexuality and the State in the Middle East. By Fait Muedini. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 274p. $105.00 cloth, $27.99 paper.
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Since the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights and activism have been under siege. Notable examples include the consecutive bans of the Istanbul Pride marches since 2016, as well as the governor of Ankara's ban on any LGBTI-themed events in the capital. Against this political background and considering the scant scholarly attention given to the issues so far, *LGBTI Rights in Turkey* is a welcome contribution to the literature on LGBTI rights and politics outside the Western world.

The book's primary purpose is to "explore the various facets of LGBTI rights in Turkey, shedding light not only on rights abuses but also on how actors are "working to improve conditions for sexual minorities" (p. 6). To do so, it presents a history of human rights abuses within Turkey, provides an overview of the current legal status of LGBTI people, and documents and discusses a variety of strategies pursued by those actors fighting for LGBTI equality. Additionally, Fait Muedini is interested in the "relationship between the use of religion and [LGBTI] human rights" (p. 6), particularly in how different actors use religion in opposition to LGBTI equality and how LGBTI activists employ religious-based arguments.

The role of religion serves as a key point of focus and a scope condition of the research. This is in part because of the way in which Muedini structures the argument.