

interests, Barta argues that both domestic institutions and economic ideas are less relevant for understanding “the most puzzling cases of sustained and substantial debt accumulation as they unfolded across time” (p. 21). In order to make her case, Barta’s empirical material consists of carefully process-traced country case studies that span from the 1970s to the 2008 global financial crisis. She first looks at Italy’s fiscal history, as a middle case of delayed and only marginally successful budgetary consolidation, in which polarization is high and international exposure moderate. She sees long periods of policy paralysis, given that large sections of Italian society were relatively sheltered from the negative side effects of debt buildups. Only in the 1990s was there a successful period of stabilization under the temporary reign of a “competitiveness” coalition supported by both labor and industry. In the 2000s, Italy saw a relapse into its old fiscal ways.

The author’s second case chapter, dealing with Belgium and Ireland, is structured as a “most similar systems design” in that they are both small open economies with nonmajoritarian political systems, where similar policy paradigms held sway around the same time. Belgium managed to implement its equivalent policy of *rigueur* in the first half of the 1980s under the reformist “Martens-Gol” Christian Democrat–Liberal coalition, thanks to the main Flemish Christian labor union’s temporary willingness to share the economic pain. Once Prime Minister Wilfried Martens swapped his liberal coalition partners for the socialists in 1987, consolidation efforts stalled. Belgium only managed to get its sovereign debt stock under control during the 1990s, thanks to a favorable international economic climate and quickly falling world interest rates. Ireland was more successful in dealing with its debt as both main parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, supported consolidation and managed to spread the burden of adjustment relatively evenly across Irish society. Given the importance of foreign direct investment in Ireland, large multinational firms enjoyed protection from higher taxes.

Barta’s third and final case chapter shows the two biggest fiscal sinners of the developed world, Greece and Japan, in a “most different systems design.” Indeed, it is hard to think of two developed countries that are more different when it comes to state strength, party system, fiscal institutions, economic performance, and international diplomatic pressure to consolidate. But both countries saw a systematic buildup of sovereign debt over a similarly long period of time, and neither is heavily exposed to international competition, while fiscal polarization is high in both places. Of course, although both countries built up large stocks of debt, Greece marched right into bankruptcy and default, while Japan continues to enjoy record low interest rates.

While Barta’s interest-based “polarization-exposure” political economy account is largely convincing, and does

a better job at explaining puzzling variation than pure institutional or ideational accounts, the book is not without its flaws. Two deserve to be mentioned: 1) the international political economy dimension of sovereign debt and 2) party politics, including the crucial and changing role that economic ideas play in guiding their fiscal policy stances.

First, a key missing dimension of the book is the role of international financial markets. Although Barta briefly discusses “financial internationalization” in the final chapter (pp. 168–69) and points to the growing importance of international creditors in financing sovereign debt, this aspect seems too omnipresent to ignore in the case studies, especially if one were to expand her framework beyond 2008. Including international political economy factors like the global economic environment helps to explain the politics of debt accumulation in the United States (which enjoys the “exorbitant privilege” of borrowing in the global reserve asset), and why countries like Germany or the Netherlands had a much easier time consolidating their debt during the 1990s and after the global financial crisis. Bond markets can either punish or reward countries, and credit rating agencies play a crucial intermediary role in this process.

Secondly, political entrepreneurs and the ideas they hold, as well as the narratives they construct about debt and deficits, are often decisive during critical junctures of high uncertainty. While Barta has a point when she argues that ideas are often used to justify coalition policies *ex post facto*, the role that ideas of austerity and structural reform played in the 1980s, 1990s, and especially post-2010, cannot be dismissed that easily. After all, there are two ways to get the debt-to-GDP ratio to fall: either by cutting the numerator or by growing the denominator. Purely focusing on austerity measures instead of demand stimulus in the short term is in itself an ideological choice.

Of course, no academic book is perfect or without its critics. Barta’s account of the politics of debt accumulation in the developed world is a shining example of the way in which excellent political economy scholarship is done. *In the Red* deserves to be read by a wide audience, and its readers will learn a great deal from it.

**The Zapatista Movement and Mexico’s Democratic Transition: Mobilization, Success, and Survival.** By María Inclán. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 184p. \$74.00 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592719000124

— Kathleen Bruhn, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

What are the implications of democratic opening for the mobilization and success of marginalized movements? The typical answer to this question anticipates an expansion of political opportunities that should lead, in turn, to better representation of marginalized interests.

María Inclán, in this brief but stimulating work, offers a more nuanced argument.

In the first place, she suggests, we need to distinguish between mobilization, movement success, and movement survival. The conditions that lead to increased mobilization do not necessarily result in success. Second, and more critically, not all democratic transitions are created equal. In particular, protracted transitions like that of Mexico can lead to informal forms of elite pacting, which discourage the real representation of marginalized interests. In her analogy, opportunities become sliding doors; the opportunities for mobilization may slide open leading to movement formation, only to have the opportunities for success slide shut, leaving movements trapped in mere survival. The Zapatista movement in Mexico becomes an example of just such a movement, one which mobilized during a moment of political opportunity but failed to achieve insertion into the negotiations over the rules of democratic transition, and so saw the chances of achieving its goals diminish.

The book focuses primarily on the structural conditions facing the Zapatistas (EZLN). On the one hand, Inclán argues that “the Zapatistas were partly responsible for this outcome [their lack of success],” by refusing to take part in democratizing negotiations despite being offered the opportunity, refusing to build alliances with the electoral Left, and largely rejecting party and institutional politics (p. 135). On the other hand, the main thrust of the argument attempts to “take some of this responsibility off the shoulders of Zapatista leaders and argue that their rejection of party and institutional politics was a justifiable response to the political conditions they faced” (p. 136). The author’s account reads fatalistically: The Zapatistas could not, or perhaps more strongly *should* not, have done anything differently than they did. However, in so doing, Inclán overplays her hand by depriving the movement of agency. The Zapatistas did have opportunities to participate in the electoral opening presented by the transition, but steadfastly refused to do so. It is questionable whether *any* democratic transition—not just a protracted one—could be expected to “include” people who want autonomy rather than inclusion, and whose definition of *democracy* does not coincide in important respects with liberal representative democracy.

The “smoking gun” moment to which Inclán points in her analysis is the exclusion of the EZLN from parallel democratizing negotiations over reform of the state. Here, she preserves the influence of structural opportunities by citing one interview indicating that the federal government wanted to contain the Zapatistas, and she concludes that “the Zapatistas were right” to refuse to participate (p. 88). The question is what it took to contain them. The Zapatistas’ disdain for electoral rules meant that its claims were limited to indigenous autonomy and did not connect to broader concerns about electoral transition.

Inclán’s counterexamples are El Salvador and South Africa, where insurgents participated in the negotiation of the transition, but in both cases, the insurgents accepted electoral outcomes as the primary avenue for representation in the subsequent regime and have actively embraced elections. The Zapatistas did not. When Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, then the presidential candidate of the Left, traveled to Zapatista territory to meet with them in 1994, they publicly criticized him in ways that undermined his electoral support. They ultimately called for abstention in the critical 2000 elections when the conservative candidate, Vicente Fox, finally toppled the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party) regime. It is not clear that the length of the transition, or even elite pacting over the rules of the game, definitively excluded the Zapatistas. Rather, to a significant degree, they excluded themselves.

The author is in on more solid ground when she shows, through an analysis of 10 years of original data on Zapatista protests, that the movement did not react to expanding political opportunities by protesting more. Instead, the presence of competitive elections seemed to diminish protests, while a PRI government in power increased them (p. 77). Because the Zapatistas did not generally run local candidates of their own, we cannot attribute this effect to having achieved their goals by gaining power. These findings bolster her claims that democratic openings do not necessarily provide movements with the means to achieve their demands, nor even with increased incentives to mobilize. These conclusions are somewhat reminiscent of Philip Oxhorn’s (*Organizing Civil Society: The Popular Sectors and the Struggle for Democracy in Chile*, 1995) argument about the demobilization of civil society after the Chilean transition, another pacted—but not protracted—transition.

Inclán’s chapter on Zapatista survival is also fascinating, on two grounds. First, she expands the definition of success and shows how Zapatista control affected the living conditions of municipal communities in a positive way despite their lack of government support. Second, she makes an interesting argument about how the internationalization of Zapatista support both enabled the movement to survive and marginalized it from key domestic political sectors, undermining its chances of achieving its original demands. This is perhaps the most understated conclusion of the book: that in shifting the movement’s discourse from local and national issues to “more foreign and diverse interests, [Subcomandante Marcos] unintentionally contributed to easing the pressure on the authorities to respond to the original causes of the conflict” (p. 101). The Zapatistas are widely and justly celebrated for pioneering an innovative discourse that enabled them to counter the Mexican government’s repressive inclinations; Inclán shows here that this innovation may have had a darker side as well. Again, the distinction among the conditions for mobilization,

success, and survival proves to be a theoretically useful one. In this case, survival and success appear to be at odds.

Overall, whether one accepts the author's sympathetic reading of the constraints facing the Zapatistas or not, the book forces us to take seriously the limits of democratic opening in Mexico for counterelite movements, particularly those that demand forms of representation going beyond the merely electoral. Mexico resembles a pacted transition more than is usually recognized, and Inclán highlights this elite behavior. Indeed, protracted transitions may be especially likely to involve the kind of pacting that excludes nonelite actors, although the case cannot be fully made without comparison to other protracted and nonprotracted transitions. Moreover, the separate chapters on mobilization, success and survival illustrate the ways in which similar initial conditions have had different implications for each of these outcomes. *The Zapatista Movement and Mexico's Democratic Transition* will be of particular interest to scholars interested in social movement mobilization, as well as scholars of Mexico.

**Copts and the Security State: Violence, Coercion, and Sectarianism in Contemporary Egypt.** By Laure Guirguis.

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. 256p. \$90.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

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— Hicham Bou Nassif, *Claremont-McKenna College*

In the last decades, physical and moral violence targeting Christians in Muslim-majority countries has increased against a backdrop of rising Islamization and entrenched authoritarianism. The tragedy of the Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi that captured media attention for a while is symptomatic of a general exclusionary undercurrent latent with religious bigotry and hatred of minorities. The subfield of Middle East studies should have been more sensitive to the tragedy of Christians in the region considering the scale of their suffering. But such is not the case because scholars generally avoid shedding light on practices victimizing Christians in the name of Islam for reasons that go beyond the limit of this review to explain. Hence, the importance of Laure Guirguis's book on the Coptic community: With empathy and objectivity, Guirguis analyzes the plight of Egypt's Christians using a wealth of Arabic resources and the testimonies of activists, intellectuals, and public figures, in addition to tracts distributed in Coptic circles. *Copts and the Security State* is well researched and deserves to be read.

The actors contributing to the othering and humiliation of Egypt's Christians operate in both the political and societal realms, and Guirguis does a fine job covering both spheres. She shows that successive Egyptian regimes exploited fears of political Islam in order to cultivate

Coptic loyalty, though Egypt's Christians suffer like their fellow citizens from the predatory practices of the powers-that-be in Cairo. The sectarianism of the Muslim Brothers has been historically unmitigated, and their antipathy toward the Copts largely undisguised—notwithstanding occasional rhetoric suggesting otherwise. The 2011 uprising could have triggered a rapprochement between Egypt's Christians and Muslims like the 1919 revolution against British rule in Egypt did. But the Muslim Brothers did everything they possibly could to sectarianize politics after former president Hosni Mubarak was ousted—including transforming a constitutional referendum in March 2011 into a vote for or against Islam, and using anti-Christian slogans and tactics to rally voters to their cause in some districts during the 2012 parliamentary elections.

Guirguis investigates these dynamics analytically; and though centered on contemporary politics, her book offers several useful flashbacks that set the present in its historical context. Beyond the political realm, she also studies societal dynamics pertaining to such issues as romantic affairs across religious lines, conversions, or the construction of new churches, all of which unfold in an uneven playing field always skewed against Copts. For instance, it is easy for a Muslim man to marry a Christian woman, but a Christian man must convert to Islam in order to marry a Muslim. Similarly, conversions from Christianity to Islam face no bureaucratic hurdles, but the opposite is not true.

Some anecdotes in the book reveal the depth of anti-Christian discrimination in Egypt. For example, in 2008 the president of the Doctor's Syndicate, Hamdi al-Sayyid, declared that he would "prohibit transplants between Muslims and Christians" (p. 59), allegedly to prevent wealthy Christian buyers from purchasing poor Muslims' organs in black market sales—thus giving credibility to the stereotype of the rich "Christian" preying on the poor "Muslim," never mind the thousands of Coptic scavengers who make a living from collecting and selling garbage (p. 59). That same year, rumors circulated in Egypt that Christians were selling pork contaminated with swine flu in a meat mixture available for Muslims to buy and eat. Surrounded with hostility, and facing intermittent episodes of outright violent persecution, many Copts have come to believe that there is an ongoing process of Arabization-Islamization of Egypt that will never stop until their complete annihilation. For their part, many Muslims are convinced that Christian proselytism is determined to destroy Islamic religion and culture; even secularization is sometimes equated with Christianization as long as both projects lead to de-Islamization in one way or another. A whole discursive system is thus constructed as a product of the tug of war between Christians and Muslims. Guirguis studies such dynamics in a particularly