obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the state-building process, it is necessary to "go beyond a Weberian focus on institutions to stress how the state's administrative organizations make themselves visible and intelligible through different kinds of performances" (pp. 4–5).

This exploration of performative aspects of state-building proceeds in three parts, beginning with an examination of the CCP's and the KMT's discourses on the ideal bureaucrat and how their respective visions were performed through the process of recruiting new bureaucrats and purging holdover officials from the previous regime. Next Strauss turns in chapters 2 and 3 to the terror campaigns initiated by the CCP and the KMT to identify possible enemies of the state. These chapters provide detailed accounts on the substantive elements of the respective terror campaigns—who was targeted, why they were targeted, and the scale of the violence—but the emphasis of the analysis is again on the performances employed to advance state-building. For the CCP, the aim was to convey the centrality of the masses in the new political order: not only did the party represent the masses but also politics itself was to be a process of mass participation. In contrast, the terror campaign in Taiwan, although no less violent in lives ruined and lost, was performed in a way that advanced the image of the regime as embodying bureaucratic expertise and legalistic procedures. The subsequent chapters on land reform proceed similarly, as Strauss details both the substance of the reforms and the accompanying political performances.

Undergirded by extensive archival research, Strauss succeeds in demonstrating the CCP's and the KMT's use of performative instruments in their respective state-building efforts. Nonetheless, the book could have provided greater specificity on the causal process through which performances substantiate government authority and offered alternative explanations of the role performative instruments play in the state-building process. In her review of the literature on political performances, Strauss highlights the work of Jeffrey Alexander, who in turn identifies the purpose of performances as producing "emotional connection of audience with actor and text and thereby creat[ing] the conditions for projecting cultural meaning from performance to audience" (*Performance and Power*, 2011, p. 53). Applied to the context of state-building, successful political performances instill new beliefs and values within society, convince the subject population of the authenticity of newly constructed political institutions, and make the political regime seem legitimate.

This argument is certainly a plausible explanation of how political performances contribute to state-building. However, this is not the only possible way performative instruments have been theorized to produce order and obedience. Competing approaches include those that regard performances as coercive instruments that condition public behavior rather than private beliefs and values, as well as those that see even unconvincing, and thus inauthentic, performances as buttressing the state's authority by fostering ambivalence and political detachment to create a complacent citizenry. A detailed theoretical discussion of the causal process linking performances to state-building, along with the use of methodological techniques such as process tracing, would have allowed readers to assess the extent to which performances instilled new meanings and authenticated the new political order in China and Taiwan or whether they advanced the CCP's and the KMT's parallel state-building campaigns through other mechanisms.

Ultimately, although both Han's and Straus's books could have benefited from further theoretical elaboration, they are nonetheless important contributions to the discourse on state-building. Thoroughly researched and empirically informative, these books also point toward avenues for further innovation in the study of state-building, as we move away from its Eurocentric origins to a more comprehensive understanding of how different forms of modern political order developed across the globe.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Rise and Fall of Political Orders. By Richard Ned Lebow. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 444p. $62.41 cloth, $29.99 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592720003060

— Stacie Goddard, *Wellesley College*
sgoddard@wellesley.edu

In the final book of a trilogy begun almost two decades ago, *The Rise and Fall of Political Orders*, Richard Ned Lebow attempts to fulfill his "rash promise" to produce a theory of order, an explanation for "how and why orders form, evolve, and decay" (p. 1). It is a strange, even surreal, moment in which to review a book on political orders. I read Lebow's book while in quarantine in my home, as a pandemic raged across the globe. As COVID-19 spread, nations spurned the international political order, turning away from institutions such as the World Health Organization, and instead competed fiercely over medical supplies. In the United States, months of pandemic lockdown ended with an explosion of protests against racial injustice and police brutality on a scale unseen since the civil rights movement.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720003060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

It seems that political orders, both domestic and international, may be at a tipping point. According to Lebow, what drives the decline and fall of political orders is their increasing illegitimacy; in particular, the increasing discrepancy between an order's principles and its elite's behavior. As Lebow argues, all orders are hierarchical, and even democratic orders will be unequal in their distribution of power, wealth, and status. Despite this, members of a polity are willing to sustain orders, as long as the distribution of valued goods is justified in terms of two principles of justice. On the one hand, an order may distribute valued goods on the basis of equality, a more or less even distribution of what people value. On the other hand, orders may rest on principles of "fairness," where who contributes the most gets the most.

Lebow argues that, in general, modern societies have moved more toward principles of equality to justify political orders. Nevertheless, in most political orders, there is tension between those who value fairness and those who see equality as the foundation of a just society. Maintaining the legitimacy of the order depends on those at the top of the political hierarchy exercising self-restraint and investing their relative largesse in the rest of the political community, so that even those at the bottom of the hierarchy perceive there is more value to working within the order than outside of it. Yet over time elites may begin to pursue their narrow and myopic "self-interest," instead of its more enlightened form. Craving more wealth, they may begin to flout the rules of norms of an order (rampant tax evasion is one manifestation of narrow self-interest). As elites become less restrained, the rest of the society sees the gap between the principles of a just order and its reality. Appeals to fairness and equality seem mere rhetoric designed to mask the operation of power.

How much light does Lebow's theory shed on the present moment? This is a fair question to ask. Although his scholarly background is in international relations, Lebow's book devotes two chapters to what he sees as dangerous fissures in the contemporary American political order. But, if anything, contemporary politics casts a harsh glare on the shortfalls of Lebow's book. To begin with, there is Lebow's decision to reduce an order's legitimating principles to fairness and equity. It seems odd that a constructivist approach—a theoretical tradition usually attuned to cultural variation and complexity—would reduce order to two legitimating principles. Lebow defends the decision by noting that these two principles appear widely across every culture, in every time period, and indeed, even among primates.

Although this claim may seem convincing, part of the ubiquity of these principles stems from the fact that they are defined so broadly. Take, for example, "fairness," which ultimately seems to refer to any form of legitimation that justifies an unequal distribution of goods on the basis that some actors "contribute" more. This might be a statement of "merit"—those who are competent get more. Or a statement of divine right—those who are born in the lineage of the kings deserve more. Or one of racism and imperialism—those nations that are white, by definition, bear the burden of civilization and thus deserve more.

To be clear, Lebow understands and says outright that many narratives of "fairness" are not actually just. But to analyze all of them as principles of fairness obscures more than it reveals. As noted earlier, Lebow's analysis of the American political order suggests that the ongoing polarization and fractious politics stem from a division in US society between those who prefer "fairness" to those who want "equality." But are those currently on the streets rejecting a principle of "fairness"? It seems more likely that protesters suspect that what is presented as a narrative of "fairness"—those who contribute more get more—is based on an assumption that whites contribute more than Black and brown people. It's not the fairness; it's the white supremacy. Reducing it to "fairness" leaves us unable to understand the pathways of contestation within the order.

Current politics also raises questions about Lebow's proposed cause of the breakdown of political orders: the inability of elites and eventually all individuals to exercise self-restraint and contribute public goods toward sustaining the order. Here I suspect there is much that is resonant in Lebow's argument. Actors of all scholarly and political stripes have bemoaned the turn away from community toward a more individually oriented, "neoliberal" model of politics, where a person's narrow, parochial, material interest is king. In his study of the United States, Lebow demonstrates this through a content analysis of two types of source material: (1) a series of presidential addresses and (2) music lyrics, drawn from a sampling of Top-100 Billboard-rated songs since the 1950s; the latter analysis shows that, whereas music of the 1950s demonstrated the "highpoint of collective identification," later lyrics demonstrate "increasing privatism" and deviance from social norms. This shift is unfortunate, he argues, because "self-interest well understood requires people to restrain their appetites and respect reasonable legal and social constraints" (p. 191).

It is this latter empirical analysis, in particular, that gives me pause. The vast majority of lyrics used to demonstrate "privatism" come from hip-hop/R&B. He notes that rappers such as Notorious B.I.G. and Sean "Puff Daddy" Combs violate norms by "making theft and murder important themes in their own right" (p. 192). TLC's "No Scrubs" is used to show how songs now "regard the impoverishment of others to advance one's own wealth as acceptable behavior" (p. 193). Songs by Rihanna and Pharrell are used to show how "songs have become focused increasingly on individual short-term sexual gratification, often accompanied by alcohol or other drugs" (p. 192).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720003060 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Lebow's content analysis, as he describes, relied on a seminar group of eight students at Dartmouth to code the material. He relies on interviews with 30 students at Dartmouth and Kings College London to analyze why these songs were appealing. There is no sense that the students were steeped in the vast literature on these musical genres or were in some other way equipped to decode the language.

Perhaps even more jarring is the fact that this part of Lebow's chapter contains no citations to scholars who have focused their academic careers on the role hip-hop plays in social and political activism. Although they may not be named Aristotle, it might have been wise to engage with the experts on this subject, such as Michael Jeffries, Imani Perry, and Aisha Durham, just to name a few. Rather than embracing the language of rampant individualism, much of current hip-hop deploys satire and subversion to mobilize a community. Nor is Lebow's sample representative. If he had looked at the work of KRS-One or Public Enemy a generation ago—or Kendrick Lamar today—he might have drawn very different conclusions about the music's meaning. Beyond this, scholars of comparative politics have long argued that we can find the roots of social mobilization and collective mobilization against order in coded text. It may be that connection to community—not the rejection—is part of the movement we are seeing today.

What is perhaps most surprising about these oversights is that they seem so inconsistent with Lebow's own theoretical and epistemological commitments, both in this book and in his corpus as a whole. He has long argued for careful attention to culture in the analysis of human behavior and orders. In this book, he notes the importance of language in both legitimating orders and mobilizing against them. Yet all of this ends up taking a backstage to much thinner conceptions of "justice" and "elite self-restraint"—which is perhaps the result of the ambition of creating a generalizable theory. As scholars push forward the study of political orders, this may underscore the importance of careful attention to variation and context in their rise and fall.

The Perils of International Capital. By Faisal Z. Ahmed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 198p. $99.99 cloth, $29.99 paper.

doi:10.1017/S1537592720002765

— David Steinberg, *Johns Hopkins University*
dsteinberg@jhu.edu

Cross-border flows of capital are an integral component of contemporary globalization, and scholarship on the economic effects of international capital movements is extensive. But the question of whether and how international capital flows influence national politics has received much less attention. Faisal Z. Ahmed's new book, *The Perils of International Capital*, goes a long way to filling in this gap. Ahmed convincingly shows that inflows of international capital have an important impact on a range of political outcomes, from the tenure of national leaders to the degree of political freedom.

The book's central argument is that international capital enhances authoritarian rule in developing countries. Increased inflows of foreign capital increase the resources available to governments, which helps dictators (and would-be dictators) repress their opponents and channel rents to potential supporters. Increases in autocrats' ability to repress and distribute pork, in turn, help them extend their tenures in office.

The book begins with an introductory chapter that provides an overview of the book and its contributions. The second chapter presents a variety of descriptive statistics that demonstrate the growing importance of international capital flows and help establish the plausibility of the book's main arguments. Chapter 3 then develops the theoretical argument about how international capital influences domestic politics.

One of the book's unique strengths is that it considers three different types of international capital flows: foreign aid, remittances, and foreign direct investment (FDI). Most scholarly works focus on just one type of capital flow; I am not aware of any earlier books that tackled all three. But Ahmed presents a strong case that research considering just one type of capital flow potentially suffers from omitted variable bias. The development of a unified theoretical framework for studying three different forms of international capital flows is one of the book's notable achievements.

The theoretical links between foreign aid and autocratic rule are fairly intuitive. Because foreign aid goes directly into a government's coffers, it directly increases a government's revenues, and governments are free to use these funds as they see fit. The book hypothesizes that autocrats are especially likely to use this revenue to finance repression and to provide private goods—fiscal transfers, for example—to key constituents such as the military.

Because remittances and FDI are private capital flows that are not directly controlled by the government, it is less obvious why they would be politically consequential. Elaborating these causal links is one of Ahmed's key theoretical innovations. Remittances are transfers of money from individuals that cross borders, often from an individual who emigrated abroad to relatives or friends who are still back home. Ahmed argues that remittances work through a "substitution effect." Individuals who receive remittances often spend those funds on health care or schooling. This creates a perverse incentive for

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720003060 Published online by Cambridge University Press