

probability that a [top-down] referendum will succeed drops below 50 percent” (p. 101).

Interestingly, Altman also finds that the opposite logic applies to citizen-initiated referendums. These are *more* likely to succeed the longer the government has been in office: “their probability of success only increases above 50 percent after the government has been in office for eight years.” He also finds “that the probability that a popular initiative or referendum will succeed is nearly 90 percent when a country is experiencing an extreme economic contraction” (p. 101).

Citizenship and Contemporary Direct Democracy is not merely a book about the recurrent patterns and laws of direct democracy. The author also proposes mechanisms for how referendums can be made compatible with the ideals of deliberative democracy. To this end, he proposes that a “Deliberative Citizens Commission” be established, in “which a stratified random sample of eligible voters are convened for the purpose of discussion, deliberating and offering a policy question that will be decided upon in a future popular vote” (p. 183). Yet, Altman does not mention that this mechanism was used before the 2018 abortion referendum in Ireland (see Jane Suiter, “Deliberation in Action—Ireland’s Abortion Referendum,” *Political Insight*, 9 (3), 2018). Sometimes, good ideas are overtaken by events, and the success of the Irish provision only supports his argument.

Although one might take issue with some of its conclusions, this is an impressive study. To paraphrase Robert Nozick’s words about Rawls, henceforth “students of referendums, must follow Altman’s lead or explain why not!”

The Quality of Divided Democracies: Minority Inclusion, Exclusion, and Representation in the New Europe.

By Lucia Cianetti. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019. 264p. \$75.00 cloth.

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— Daina Eglitis, *George Washington University*

Lucia Cianetti’s book, *The Quality of Divided Democracies: Minority Inclusion, Exclusion, and Representation in the New Europe*, is an examination of how democracy functions in practice in ethnically divided societies. Although Cianetti has chosen to highlight two cases of post-Soviet states that have particularly significant ethnic cleavages, she posits that ensuring full political equality in increasingly multicultural societies is a challenge in nearly all modern democratic states today. Her book is an ambitious effort to describe that challenge, recognize its constituent parts, and lay out “some of the coordinates needed to understand what is involved in making our contemporary, ethnically heterogeneous democracies work” (p. 2).

Cianetti’s work is premised on the fundamental normative assumption that democracy entails the effective

inclusion of all those who are subject to decisions taken by the state and its elected bodies. Alas, as she points out, the practical meaning of “inclusion” is contestable. The book is in part an exploration of this meaning and seeks to assess the extent to, and channels by which, minority communities exercise voice in policy making. Cianetti introduces an original concept to convey some of the challenges to political inclusion and to policy making that is attentive to minority interests. The *presence-polarization dilemma* highlights the paradox that “a liberal minority policy can be the result of an exclusionary democratic process, while an inclusionary democratic process does not necessarily return policies that are favorable to the minority” (p. 7). In Chapter 2, Cianetti elaborates the theoretical foundations of the book with attention to the presence-polarization dilemma, which she develops out of key concepts in the debate on divided democracies. She uses it to assess the inclusiveness of the democratic process and the means by which minority groups gain access to the levers of national- and local-level political decision making.

In Chapter 3, Cianetti describes the political landscape of Estonia and Latvia in the postcommunist period to set the stage for her political analysis of the status of Russian-speaking minorities. She is thorough in her discussion of the legal dimensions of exclusive citizenship laws, as well as the party systems and electoral practices of these states. The key weakness of this chapter is the author’s failure to set the historical scene in which these communities evolved into their present form. Indeed, she treats the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries, which Western states rightly recognized as an illegal annexation, as a subjective political position: “The restorationist approach to nation building that eventually prevailed maintained that the USSR had illegally occupied Estonia and Latvia, and so the two countries had the right to restore their sovereignty in continuity with the interwar Estonian and Latvian populations” (p. 39). Although the question of whether restorationism, which foresaw political continuity with the interwar independent states, was exclusionary and produced a problematic foundation for democratic development is worthy of examination, the illegality and material consequences of the Soviet annexation of the Baltic countries in 1940 are facts. Cianetti acknowledges that a full discussion of sociopolitical history is not possible, but suggests that her goal is to highlight features that are relevant to the contemporary political status of the Russophone minority. This makes her omission of even a brief Soviet-era history problematic: the provenance of these populations is directly relevant to understanding the perception of political risk that has affected decisions about inclusion and exclusion made by politicians from parties supported by many Latvian and Estonian voters. This background should be provided, rather than assumed or dismissed.

The remaining substantive chapters focus on five key channels for minority access to policy making:

parliamentary representation, support from international organizations, decision-making power in city administrations, stakeholder consultations, and grassroots mobilization. For each channel except the last one, she uses a specific case study to illustrate minority presence and empowerment. Space considerations preclude close examination of each chapter, but two stand out for their keen observations on minority inclusion and exclusion in practice. Chapter 4, “The Parliamentary Channel,” would seem to tread a relatively well-worn path with its examination of party politics and lawmaking, particularly concerning minority citizenship access and rights. Cianetti’s application of the presence-polarization dilemma concept to the cases, however, illuminates aspects of majority-minority politics that might otherwise be missed. The concept permits the recognition of a key distinction between process and outcome. On the one hand, she observes, for instance, that “while the policy outcome [of conferring voting rights in local elections in Estonia] was favorable to non-citizens (and, by extension, for the Russian-speaking minority), it was not the result of a compromise but, rather of the majority elite’s ‘magnanimity’” (p. 75). On the other hand, in Latvia, non-citizens’ political rights have remained more circumscribed, but as Cianetti writes, “the ‘worse’ policy outcome for the minority. . . was not the result of a ‘worse’ (in the sense of less inclusive) policymaking process” (p. 77). She concludes that policy content is not an optimal indicator of the democratic inclusivity of the policy process. This assertion is of interest in both the broad discussion of divided democracies and the narrower contrast between ethnic politics in two countries that are commonly discussed with little distinction between them.

Chapter 6, “The City Channel,” offers insight into a little-studied arena of majority-minority politics. As Cianetti points out, city-level analysis is important because minorities often find a smoother path to representation in local politics. Although Latvia, unlike Estonia, does not permit noncitizens to vote in local elections, about 53% of Russian speakers hold citizenship (p. 43), and their significant demographic presence in Riga (about 51%) has given them a strong foothold in the capital city’s political life. Importantly as well, she posits, “Ethnically diverse cities have to deal with the daily management of diversity, which makes their administration potentially more sensitive to pragmatic problem solving than to the symbolic policy framing often prevalent at the state level” (p. 102). In this chapter, Cianetti focuses on debates and policies around minority education, in particular the integration of majority-language courses in minority-serving school curricula. While national-level policy making sets the parameters of policy, ambiguous policies have sometimes opened a space for significant minority representation in practical implementation. The presence-polarization dilemma that Cianetti develops throughout

the book is particularly interesting in this chapter, because it shows city representation as a strong channel for minority empowerment (Latvia) or, alternatively, as a potentially disempowering “trap” (Estonia; p. 127). In the former, a polarizing national debate and active grassroots protest against reform of Russian-language schools created an opportunity for the minority party in city government to engage in compromise that facilitated flexible implementation of language policies, bearing out the hypothesis that local governments are more likely to engage in pragmatic than symbolic politics. In the latter, the non-minority Center Party of former Tallinn mayor and national political figure Edgar Savisaar, which has sought to build a base of minority voters and members, engaged in sharp conflict with national governing parties over the school language issue, eschewing a path of compromise in pursuit of a symbolic victory. Cianetti concludes from the cases that “minority representation through an ethnic party might offer a better avenue to legitimize and empower minority voices than incorporation through a mainstream patron-party” (p. 127), an interesting point considering that urban areas across the democratic West are home to significant minority populations whose representation is largely dependent on majority parties that make space for minority interests.

Thus Cianetti’s book comprises meticulously constructed case studies that use the sharp conceptual tool of the presence-polarization dilemma that she has developed. The substantial case detail will be appreciated by area studies-oriented readers. The book’s contribution, however, is not limited to Baltic studies. The nuanced treatment of the dynamics of majority-minority politics should be of far broader interest. *The Quality of Divided Democracies* is deserving of a wide readership.

Demography and Democracy: Transitions in the Middle East and North Africa. By Elhum Haghghat. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 276p. \$99.99 cloth, \$29.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S153759271900149X

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The question of why the Middle East has remained socioeconomically and politically underdeveloped in comparison to the West has been a major preoccupation for scholars across generations. A venerable perspective identifies the causes and remedies of underdevelopment in internal dynamics of the countries in the region. As societies achieve economic growth, they gradually develop characteristics conducive to democratization. Detractors challenge this perspective for ignoring international and intranational power asymmetries and inequalities that perpetuate patterns of underdevelopment.

In *Demography and Democracy*, Elhum Haghghat builds on this modernization perspective and aims to offer a structural explanatory framework to make sense of the