Amy Erica Smith, *Religion and Brazilian Democracy: Mobilizing the People of God*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Figures, tables, appendixes, bibliography, index, 222 pp.; hardcover $99.99, ebook $80.

In November 2018, far-right populist Jair Bolsonaro was elected president of Brazil, with the strong support of both Evangelical clergy and voters. Once in office, he was quick to return the favor. Bolsonaro's first minister of education, a favorite of the Evangelical community, was short on traditional qualifications but highly critical of "gender ideology" and supportive of "the traditional values of our society," such as "the preservation of life, of family, of religion" (Cafardo 2018). In July 2019, Bolsonaro proposed naming the first Evangelical justice to Brazil's Supreme Court, noting that "the state is secular, but we are Christians" (Calgaro and Mazui 2019). In one of the first countries of the Americas to legalize same-sex marriage, politics has taken a decidedly different turn of late.

Socially conservative political backlashes against progressive policy trends are hardly unique to Latin America—one need look no further than the United States under the Trump Administration. Yet Evangelical support for Donald Trump, and the politics of the U.S. culture wars more generally, cannot be understood apart from the two-party system and the coalitional dynamics of the Republican Party. In Brazil's famously fragmented party system, with numerous parties "for rent" and few with well-defined social bases, how are we to make sense of the decades-long influence of religious conservatives and the increasing salience of political conflict around abortion, LGBTQ rights, and related policy issues?

In this impressive new book, Amy Erica Smith argues that Catholic and Evangelical clergy are key protagonists in Brazil's culture wars, serving as the brokers and opinion leaders who influence the behavior of both religious voters and religious politicians. In this respect, their role is akin to that of labor unions, which similarly socialize, mobilize, and broker the votes of their membership. Yet religious communities are much more fragmented than organized labor, and their members may be more hesitant to endorse full-throated participation in politics. Consequently, clergy are also constrained in their ability to politicize the faithful, primarily by the threat of membership loss amid interdenominational competition and increasing secularism.

Smith's book explores the empirical implications of "clergy-driven culture wars" by weaving together an unprecedented wealth of data on congregants, clergy, legislators, and the general public, including interviews, focus groups, participant observation, traditional survey analysis, and survey experiments. The core of the book is a case study of Brazil's 2014 election as it played out in the medium-sized city of Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais. Here, Smith leverages detailed insights from a multimethod study of a sample of Catholic, Evangelical, and Pentecostal congregations. The analysis is broadened via interviews of clergy in other parts of Brazil, as well as national-level public opinion surveys, including several original ones.

Following the introduction, part 2 of the book examines clergy's political views and their efforts to influence congregants. Clergy have clear opinions on social and political issues, and they preach about these issues from the pulpit. Yet their priorities

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differ by denomination. Compared to Evangelicals and Pentecostals, Catholic clergy emphasize progressive topics, such as ministry to the poor and racism, and they downplay homosexuality. One reason for the difference is that the Catholic Church faces a two-front war for survival as it loses members to both Evangelicalism and secular society. Reminded of these membership pressures via a survey experiment, Catholic clergy report less frequent preaching on conservative topics, such as chastity, abortion, God's wrath, and the End Times, whereas Evangelicals and Pentecostals are unaffected.

Membership pressures and congregants' opinions also influence what clergy say about elections and voting. While the old Evangelical mantra of "believers don't mess with politics" has been thoroughly cast aside, members' attitudes toward politicking from the pulpit can also influence how far clergy are willing to go. Some churches thrust themselves fully into electoral and party politics, such as the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, where Smith observed pastors endorsing specific candidates. Others tread carefully for fear of alienating congregants, limiting themselves to messages that encourage political participation and a "conscientious vote." Yet membership threats can also spur political activity. When reminded of these threats, Evangelical clergy were more likely to support legislative action, and Catholic clergy were more likely to favor endorsing a candidate.

How do congregants respond to clergy efforts to influence their opinions and voting behavior? Part 3 of the book addresses this question. On most issues, including environmentalism, race relations, and the economic role of the state, Catholics, Evangelicals, and the nonreligious do not differ significantly in their attitudes. On abortion and same-sex marriage, however, Evangelicals and Catholics lie significantly to the right. While preaching on these issues or interaction with other congregants might socialize the faithful into conservative policy attitudes, self-selection—choosing a church that aligns with preexisting attitudes—is also a likely cause. And while clergy endorsements can influence voting decisions, policy attitudes seem to matter even more. In a survey vignette experiment involving a fictitious candidate, describing the candidate as a gay rights activist reduced vote intention more than simply saying that Evangelical pastors opposed him.

In part 4, Smith tackles the question of what Brazil's clergy-driven culture wars mean for democratic representation. While Evangelical legislators are good representatives of their faith community's opinions with respect to abortion and same-sex marriage, they are significantly more conservative on several other issues, including the economic role of the state, spending for the poor, and affirmative action. Smith argues that the divergence results from Evangelical legislators' ties to clergy, who do have more conservative positions on these issues. Clergy endorsements give candidates access to a valuable grassroots constituency that may be willing to vote on the basis of clientelistic offers or policy alignment on certain core issues, overlooking disagreement on others. Thus, clergy-driven culture wars are a mixed bag for representation.

One particularly valuable aspect of Smith's detailed portrait of different congregations in the city of Juiz de Fora is its nuanced view of religion and politics—a useful corrective to the often one-dimensional portrayal in media and some scholarly accounts. While Brazil's most outspoken pastors routinely make headlines for

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their political statements, many congregants in Juiz de Fora oppose overt politicking. Most Catholic and Evangelical clergy and congregants disapprove of abortion and same-sex marriage, but not all support laws that would ban them. For those who sometimes feel as if Christians speak with a single voice in present-day Latin American politics, the book is an important reminder that a single voice, if it existed, would actually speak much more loudly.

As with all decisions about research design, Smith's primary (though not exclusive) focus on one election in a single city entails trade-offs. One perspective that receives somewhat less attention in the book is the longitudinal one. Smith argues that conflict between Evangelicals and Catholics with respect to state privileges and religious freedom is a second major factor, beyond liberal trends on sexuality and the family, that drives Brazil's culture wars. Certain policy issues in this realm have mobilized Evangelicals in recent years. For example, the signing of a Concordat with the Holy See in 2009 prompted the Evangelical caucus to push for legislation extending the same benefits to other churches. And Smith's data show that Evangelical and Catholic clergy differ in terms of perceived state neutrality toward religion and whether they think the Brazilian political system is fair and deserves respect.

Yet Catholic-Evangelical conflict and state policies toward religion were a much bigger cleavage and motivator for political activity during an earlier era—the redemocratization period and the 1986 elections for Brazil's Constituent Assembly. The salience of this cleavage, and the degree to which it motivates Evangelicals' political involvement, has faded significantly since then, as sexuality and family traditionalism have risen to the fore. Here, Evangelicals and Catholics are more natural allies than adversaries, something that Smith's data support. Asked about their attitudes toward various social groups, Catholics and Evangelicals rated each other more highly than any other category. Moreover, there is evidence that these attitudes have become more positive over time, which would be consistent with a declining interdenominational cleavage.

Overall, *Religion and Brazilian Democracy* offers a thorough, multifaceted view of how clergy sometimes seek, and sometimes succeed, to exert political influence in Brazil's culture wars. Delving deep into congregational life through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and participant observation, the book sheds a nuanced light on the key role that churches play in helping their members make sense of the political world. The book is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand present-day conservative politics in Brazil and in Latin America more generally. The argument will also have important implications for the study of culture wars in other countries with weak party systems, such as Uganda.

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