

Then, in the penultimate chapter, Leheny takes on the relationship between social science and the politics of optimism. He recounts his own volunteer work in an evacuee center after the triple disasters of 3/11, as an awkward foreign social scientist lacking many relevant skills for managing trauma. He also examines at length the work of fellow social scientists engaged in the Tokyo University Institute of Social Science-sponsored *kibōgaku*, or “Social Sciences of Hope” project, whose long-term research field, Kamaishi, a declining rural community in northeast Japan, suddenly was at the center of the tsunami destruction zone.

Before the disaster hit its field site, the *kibōgaku* group worked to map factors—such as social network ties—that might contribute to revitalization. After the disaster, Kamaishi was heralded for the fact that all but two of its 600 junior high school students saved themselves from the incoming tsunami by insisting on moving higher and higher into the hills near their school’s site, whereas in other communities children perished in schools that used more cautious approaches. Observers attributed the Kamaishi students’ confident actions to the sense of self-reliant optimism that they developed in part through disaster preparation training and, some said, in part through inspiration they had taken from the *kibōgaku* scholar Genda Yūji, who had told them at a pre-disaster school assembly that his life’s goal was to die “still having dreams” (p. 171). Leheny examines writing by Genda Yūji, one of the leaders of the *kibōgaku* group, as well as a report by a redevelopment council in which Genda played a significant role. The redevelopment council report, “Hope Beyond the Disaster,” argues that disaster areas’ sense of agency will be essential to their rebuilding; to create that sense of agency, they will need *hope*, which they must cultivate through “linkages” across various social and economic categories; local people and outsiders; local, regional, and national governments; and private and public sector actors (p. 180).

Leheny debates whether the report is a form of what theorist Laurent Berlant calls “cruel optimism” (p. 181). He stops short of such a piercing critique, suggesting instead that “hope might become something akin to a placeholder for something else: perhaps worry, perhaps grief, perhaps even outrage” (pp. 181–82). Throughout the book, I sensed that the worry, grief, and maybe especially the outrage were also Leheny’s. His raw account of his own desperate sense of ineffectiveness in the face of the disasters startled me into my own troubling memories of watching the disasters on television in my Virginia mountain home. I was also shaken by his painstaking recounting of how, both before and after the disasters, the *kibōgaku* scholars found that citizens in the grips of structural decline (or a massive disaster’s aftermath) should create hope by pursuing Tocquevillian associational life. I am also a social scientist who has worked in

the civil society research field where such approaches were born.

In Leheny’s discussion of the well-meaning but also helpless engagement of the *kibōgaku* group with pre- and postdisaster Kamaishi, I saw in clear relief what he meant when he wrote that “even socially conscious scholars” get wrapped up in the “official story” of hope, “a melodrama of the national reclamation of innocence as an essential part of a country’s better future” (p. 147). We do not have a means of talking about or working with inevitable decline or of honestly engaging tragic communal loss. We are scholars in fields born to serve the engines of economic growth, to keep the global markets chugging along, to keep the workers fed, the consumers (sort of) safe. But in a world where this cannot any longer be our role, where the globe cannot withstand this sort of energy, where the liberal political coalitions that have relied on it are crumbling and opening the doors to terrifying alternatives, we, too, sell soft power and network theories of the sources of economic well-being and community resilience programs. Because we, too, like the political and pop culture leaders Leheny studies, are mostly just selling a low-art affect.

In a sense, *Empire of Hope* is best understood not as a book about how nations use sentimental politics, but rather, especially in its rich final chapters, as about the empty agenda of liberal politics and its allied social science in the postindustrial world. The cases Leheny treats will be valuable histories for Japanologists in several fields, including political science, sociology, and anthropology. And his reflections on the social science response to Japan’s triple disasters have much to say to scholars well beyond Japan studies.

Doomed Interventions: The Failure of Global

Responses to AIDS in Africa. By Kim Yi Dionne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 208p. \$93.99 cloth, \$29.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S153759271900450X

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For more than 30 years, the global HIV/AIDS epidemic has torn through countries with devastating consequences: 75 million people have been infected, 32 million people have died, and 37.9 million people are living with HIV. The majority of these people reside in the developing world, with Africa being ground zero for the epidemic. Despite this level of devastation, little systematic attention in the social sciences, with some exceptions, has been given to developing or using solid theoretical foundations to understand the complicated dynamics of the epidemic and the effectiveness of the responses to it.

Researchers, scholars, and practitioners should consider Kim Yi Dionne’s book, *Doomed Interventions: The Failure of the Global Responses to AIDS in Africa*, a major attempt

to fill this void. Based on nearly a decade of research, the book is a comprehensive examination of Malawi's struggle with HIV/AIDS that rests atop a theoretical puzzle that traverses political economy, liberalism, and public policy issues: Why is there a policy disconnect between the international donors supporting HIV/AIDS interventionism and the policies eventually implemented by local agents? Dionne's book is the product of extensive field research conducted between 2006–10 that includes elite interviews, random sample surveys of rural Malawians, archival research, and ethnographic studies. She employs complementary secondary data analysis using Afrobarometer and Demographic and Health surveys across 30 African states, data from multiple international agencies, and government policy documents. This research is one of the most methodologically comprehensive approaches to understanding the global epidemic and its response produced in its more than 30-year history. Thus, the reader should have little doubt about the validity of the conclusions reached in the book. Dionne's central argument is that the disconnect between donors and local agents results from the complex and ineffective nature of implementing interventions across multiple levels of governance and that the misaligned priorities between donors and targeted recipients are a result of leaders and citizens who do not give HIV/AIDS high priority in the context of the many substantial problems that Africans face on a daily basis.

After presenting an outline of her argument and methodology in the first chapter, the second chapter provides the reader an overview of the AIDS epidemic and the status of AIDS interventions in Africa. In chapter 3, Dionne establishes the central problems facing AIDS interventions on the continent: (1) the principal-agent problem that hinders intervention efforts and promotes problems such as corruption and (2) the misalignment of priorities within the interventions that can be traced to distinct differences between donor expectations and recipient priorities. This chapter is also the major theoretical contribution that Dionne makes to the literature and discussion of principal-agent problems. The principal-agent framework presented works exceedingly well as a theoretical starting point that challenges assumptions that interventions are linear or cookie-cutter policies in which all the actors are aligned with the same goals and objectives. Dionne presents the principal-agent issue in the context of a hierarchy of stakeholders (p. 46): international agents, national agents and principals, regional agents and principals, local agents, and ordinary citizens. International agents are, essentially, the funding mechanisms that lack the capacity for implementation, which must be done at the local level; national agents are domestic agents such as the Ministry of Health and others that implement interventions; regional agents implement national programs in their respective geographic areas; local agents are the significant link with

those that may benefit from the intervention and may include village leaders, doctors, religious leaders, and community workers; ordinary citizens are the last people within the global chain—the intended recipients of the intervention.

This hierarchical portrayal of the global-to-local chain for intervention is important because it highlights the underlying problem at all links within it: the potential for people to exploit financial holes at every step, which leads to corruption or the misalignment of policies (intended and unintended; pp. 42–50). Dionne illustrates this problem with a detailed description of Kenya's AIDS intervention corruption case that led to the investigation and dismissal of two successive directors of Kenya's National AIDS Control Council. The Kenyan corruption case demonstrates the extent of the problem, involving implicated auditors and directors, senior managers, secretaries, government ministries, and NGOs accused of graft and corruption in the distribution of AIDS intervention funds. Although it may be easy to dismiss this corruption as motivated by personal enrichment, this case also demonstrates, certainly on a small scale, the nature of African patrimonialism and clientelism (such as that described by Nicolas Van de Walle and Joel Migdal in their research) where the accused had dispersed money to friends, subordinates, and others in their network of influence. Dionne makes this point, though subtly, leaving open the question of how much intervention money may be used as a method to buy or to consolidate political power versus its use for personal enrichment. This question is not easily answerable, but the role of patrimonial and clientelist politics cannot be disentangled from what Dionne accurately paints as a feeding frenzy for intervention money (p. 44).

In chapters 4–6, Dionne presents the detailed case study of Malawi and highlights the importance of donors in the country's HIV/AIDS intervention. These chapters also present a detailed account of the local agents, village and local leaders, and the context of their decision making in rural areas that face significant problems that challenge AIDS intervention for priority. For instance, in a multitude of interviews with village leaders, she finds that their most pressing issue is their local water supply. But her research nicely contextualizes this as local leaders representing their *entire* population: everyone needs access to water (and food), even HIV-positive people. Hence, the picture she paints for the reader is one of practical governance and responsiveness to the needs of the local community.

Dionne concludes the book with a summary of her findings and concrete policy recommendations. The practical solutions that Dionne highlights include enhancing HIV/AIDS awareness and bundling HIV/AIDS intervention money with other development assistance to deter siphoning money to other pressing issues. The larger theoretical and normative question is within the

context of developing democracies: Whose priorities matter—those of international donors or of local principals and agents? This question takes on even more importance given the colonial and postcolonial history of African states formerly subjected to the external influences of the major colonial powers and now to the major investment powers (such as Russia and China). Moreover, people living with HIV in other African states have faced a culture of discrimination, abuse, denunciation, demonization, sexual violence, and even death that is based on fear rooted in deeply traditional belief systems. Many of these abuses have been at the hands of the very local agents and fellow citizens among whom they live. If framed in this manner, then international donors may not be so easily swayed from what they see as a health problem with significant human rights currents running through it, an issue that has galvanized many HIV/AIDS activists.

If the late Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill was correct, all politics is local. We should not be surprised that there exist corruption and a disconnect between donors and intended recipients, given the aid supply chain for interventions. Dionne’s research does an excellent job of bringing these issues to the fore in a sophisticated and comprehensive manner; her book is thus an important read for students of political economy, public policy, and global health governance.

Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq. By Samuel Helfont. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 304p. \$34.95 cloth. doi:10.1017/S153759271900464X

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Samuel Helfont’s new book, *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq*, advances our understanding of the connections between religious policy under the Ba’athists and the insurgencies that engulfed the country since the US invasion in 2003. For scholars of religion and politics, the work provides a case study of a unique combination of strategies embraced by an authoritarian ruler to control and ultimately transform the religious landscape. For scholars of authoritarianism, the work is rich. Helfont effectively argues that what sometimes appears to be policy shifts are actually not changes but rather are the result of new possibilities opened up by authoritarian consolidation, an idea worthy of more systematic treatment by other scholars. Bringing these two streams together, Helfont illustrates the catastrophic consequences of the abrupt removal of an authoritarian regime that had a carefully constructed bureaucracy to control religion. It is thus an important work for a broad range of scholars in the discipline.

The book’s 11 short chapters make for a quick-paced and pleasant read. Part I analyzes Saddam’s penetration of the Iraqi religious landscape, Part II examines how that landscape was then used to defend state actions during the Gulf Crisis, and Part III examines Saddam’s Faith Campaign, the regime’s most explicit statement of its religious policy, which lasted from the end of the Gulf War until the regime’s removal in 2003. Part IV analyzes how the abrupt removal of institutions constructed to constrain religious actors facilitated the rise of insurgent groups after the US invasion.

The primary source materials for the work are documents from the Ba’athist archives, which are currently housed at Stanford University. Although this book is exceptional in its sources and analysis, it is not a work of political science. It is therefore only weakly engaged with the most important literature and debates of the three fields to which it is most relevant for political scientists: comparative politics, religion and politics, and Middle East politics. Nevertheless, the importance of this case geopolitically and the Ba’athists’ unique approach to managing religion warrant broad scholarly engagement with the text.

Despite its distance from the political science literature per se, *Compulsion in Religion* is theoretically timely. Scholarship on religion and politics in the Middle East has already illustrated how the various arrangements of the state’s institutionalization of religion shape the religious landscape and religious opposition in particular countries (see, for example, the work of Stéphane LaCroix on Saudi Arabia, Thomas Pierret on Syria, and my own work on Morocco). Helfont steps into this conversation effectively if not self-consciously. In fact, the work does not engage explicitly with *any* of the major works of religion and politics with which it has the most in common theoretically, limiting the discursive impact of what otherwise could have been a truly landmark work in the study of religion and authoritarianism. Nevertheless, for scholars willing to go searching for the theoretical insights peppered throughout the work, the treasure hunt yields results.

Helfont’s work effectively expands on the insights of other scholars. In Syria under Hafez al-Asad, the absence of a state-supported clerical establishment meant that clerics did not have to choose whether to align with the regime, as they do in many other Muslim countries. Rather, they factionalized with “varying degrees of proximity to the state” (Thomas Pierret, *Religion and State in Syria: The Sunni Ulama from Coup to Revolution*, 2013, p. 20). The regime thus “subcontracted” with loyal clerics, who remained technically independent of state structures. In Morocco, by contrast, the state’s virtual monopoly on religious institutions has resulted in an incentive structure that encourages religious elites to align with (and be employed by) the state (Ann Wainscott, *Bureaucratizing Islam: Morocco and the War on*