

victims need to be aware of their rights, feel secure pursuing them, and be able to frame matters in rights terms (pp. 24–28). Under these conditions, as well as additional factors highlighted in each empirical chapter, Michel argues that the right to private prosecution offers victims a powerful tool to enhance state responsiveness and accountability (p. 8).

The book begins with an overview (the introduction) that Michel might have used to better situate the work in the (admittedly scant) literature on the access to justice and litigation. Chapter 1 examines the role private prosecution plays as an accountability tool, and chapter 2 traces the right's diffusion across the Latin American region. Chapters 3–5 offer empirical, chronological analyses of the evolution of private prosecution in Guatemala, Chile, and Mexico, respectively; this organization makes more difficult the systematic cross-national comparison that is at least one goal of the book. The book's very brief conclusion is followed by a series of appendices and a useful glossary.

As Michel rightly notes, this terrific book breaks new ground by investigating, highlighting, and elevating exceptions to the “typical” situation of impunity—one that both reflects and exacerbates inequality, ineffective democratic institutions, and a weak rule of law. At the heart of her analysis are critical questions of citizenship and inclusion: providing citizens with tools to challenge prosecutorial discretion increases their ability to access justice and escape what Guillermo O'Donnell (*On the State: Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems*, 1993) has so evocatively referred to as “low-intensity citizenship.” The examples that Michel highlights are critically important in demonstrating that, in the face of prosecutorial failure, “revictimization” (i.e., citizens suffering from impunity as well as from crime; pp. 2, 42) is *not inevitable*. In the majority of Latin American countries, exercising their right to private prosecution inserts victims as empowered actors into a process that usually does not include them. Importantly, in exercising that right, citizens are rejecting extra-institutional options and instead using the very institutional structures that failed them in order to challenge the state—relegitimizing, validating, and strengthening it in the process (p. 17). The book thus illuminates the conditions under which institutional failure can lead to institutional fortification, and in particular how marginalized citizens—unexpected protagonists—can contribute to that outcome.

**Minorities and Reconstructive Coalitions: The Catholic Question.** By Willie Gin. New York: Routledge, 2017. 224p. \$155.00 cloth.

doi:10.1017/S1537592719004778

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In 1928, Al Smith—the first Catholic to run for the US presidency—faced virulent anti-Catholicism. He lost by

a landslide. The stained-glass ceiling was not broken until fellow Democrat John F. Kennedy overcame the “Catholic question” and won the presidency in a nail-biter, despite losing a number of Southern states that had been Democratic bastions.

In 1929, Australia elected its first Catholic prime minister, James Scullin. Over the next two decades, Australia would have two more Catholic prime ministers, serving for 14 of those 20 years.

In Canada, the first Catholic prime minister, John Thompson, was elected back in 1892. He was followed by a fellow Catholic, Wilfred Laurier. But after Laurier, it would be nearly four decades until Canada had another Catholic as prime minister.

In this fascinating and well-reasoned book, Willie Gin sets out to explain why the political incorporation of Catholics varied across these three nations that in many ways are culturally similar. In fact, the puzzles go deeper than merely who was elected as president or prime minister, because Catholics in the three nations fared differently in both legislative elections and executive appointments. Furthermore, the three nations vary in the extent to which Catholics are found across the political spectrum and not concentrated in one party. How, when, and why did Catholics move from being a stalwart constituency on the political left to an electoral bloc critical to both conservative and liberal parties?

If they think about the “political mainstreaming” of Catholics at all, most Americans likely assume that the story of Catholic acceptance hinges on John F. Kennedy's famous declaration to a hostile gathering of Protestant ministers: “I do not speak for my church on public matters, and the church does not speak for me.” But, as Gin details, there is much more to the Catholic story.

Contrary to a sociological explanation of Catholic acceptance being rooted in bridging across religious lines (full disclosure: an argument I have made), Gin puts politics front and center. Catholics cease to be marginalized, he argues, when they are part of a reconstructive political coalition. Importantly, a reconstructive coalition is not to be confused with a coalition of political convenience. For example, for decades the Democratic Party's coalition included many Northern Catholics, but this did not prevent fellow Democrats, typically in the South, from expressing anti-Catholic attitudes in either 1928 or 1960. The reason was that the Democratic coalition at the time was simply an assembly of voting blocs, united by a desire to win elections and not much else. In contrast, a reconstructive coalition “is not merely designed for electoral victory, but . . . also espouses a broader umbrella identity that subsumes both the majority and minority identities” (p. 10).

The Australian case illustrates how such a coalition can be formed. In Australia, Catholics became fully incorporated into the national political system because they were embedded in the Labor Party's coalition, which forged an identity rooted in class. Australia, however, also illustrates how political incorporation is refracted through the unique characteristics of each nation. It did not have deep regional divides, thus enabling a nationwide labor movement. Its rate of unionization was comparatively high, which fostered a "big tent" Labor Party. And compulsory voter turnout prevented any efforts to keep Catholics from the polls. In combination, these conditions created a coalition of the working class that transcended any religious differences.

As is so often the case in the United States, Gin argues that the impediment to a comparable reconstructive coalition was race or, specifically, Southern Democrats' desire to maintain Jim Crow in the former Confederacy. Once de jure segregation ended, the door opened for Southerners to join with culturally conservative Catholics—forging a common identity rooted in a defense of traditional values, such as opposition to abortion and LGBTQ rights. Today, some of the fiercest culture warriors in the Religious Right are Catholics, such as Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich. Meanwhile, liberal Catholics found a place in the Democratic coalition, not because they are Catholics, but because of their identity as liberals. Thus, John Kerry was the party's presidential nominee in 2004, and Joe Biden served two terms as vice president. In perhaps the most telling example of Catholics' successful incorporation into US politics, liberal Catholics often take heat from conservative Protestants for not being "Catholic enough"—for supporting abortion rights and same-sex marriage.

Meanwhile, as is so often the case in Canada, Gin argues that the obstacle to full Catholic incorporation was the nation's deep regional divisions, particularly between Quebec and the rest of the country. Perhaps ironically, he notes, the fact that Catholics are a larger share of the population in Canada (40%) than in either Australia or the United States impeded their full incorporation, even though individual Catholics were able to be elected prime minister. As the majority in Quebec, Catholics could wield considerable power in *la belle province*. They also had a critical mass in other provinces, making them an important voting bloc. In the past, then, provincialism delayed a pan-Canadian reconstructive coalition. Today, however, Catholics are fully part of the Liberal Party's coalition; both Justin Trudeau and his father Pierre are exemplars of center-left Quebecers who, although nominally Catholic, are better described as products of a secularized Quebec. Trudeau *père* decriminalized homosexuality and abortion; Trudeau *fils* is staunchly pro-choice and marches in Pride parades. In this way, liberal Catholics in Canada are much like their American

counterparts. Yet unlike in the United States, conservative Protestants and Catholics in Canada have not formed an alliance in the culture war: the Religious Right has never found much traction north of the 49th parallel.

Obviously, these arguments make Gin's book a deep dive into the differing trajectories of Catholics in these three nations. Yet for all that this book can teach us about the specific case of Catholics, it is just as valuable as a lens to understand the political incorporation of many other minority groups—whether religious, ethnic, or racial. And even though it focuses on Australia, Canada, and the United States, I would venture to say that the idea of reconstructive coalitions travels well. I encourage future scholars to put it to the test for other groups in other contexts.

Finally, there is still another lesson in this book, particularly for US readers. I fear Americanists often take "American exceptionalism" too literally, and fail to appreciate what can be learned by comparing the United States to other nations. Here we have an excellent example of how both Canada and Australia make for fruitful comparisons with the United States. All three nations are geographically large and resource-rich, born of British roots but with a federal system of governance (not to mention that, regrettably, they also share the historic mistreatment of indigenous peoples). I have long been puzzled why more Americanists do not look North or South to better understand what is exceptional about the United States and what is not. Gin's book is an excellent example of what can be gained from truly comparative research. The study of Catholics' political incorporation is only the beginning.

**Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective.** Edited by Noam

Lupu, Virginia Oliveros, and Luis Schiumerini. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2019. 304p. \$80.00 cloth.  
doi:10.1017/S1537592719004043

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*Campaigns and Voters in Developing Democracies: Argentina in Comparative Perspective* is an essential book in understanding voters' choices, political elites' behavior, and political parties in contemporary Argentina. The book makes three important contributions. First, it is one of the only volumes that departs from the assumption that the factors that drive voter behavior in advanced democracies also determine voters' choice in developing democracies (see also Ryan Carlin, Matthew Singer, and Elizabeth Zechmeister's, *The Latin American Voter*, 2015). The editors Noam Lupu, Virginia Oliveros, and Luis Schiumerini argue that the prevailing context of developing democracies—marked by a weak civil society, high levels of poverty and inequality, weak political parties and