

more about a leader's performance in office than how he or she came to power or other procedural niceties. These views about the normalcy—and even necessity—of a nearly “all-powerful” leader (p. 1) suggest that Guo would agree with Joseph Fewsmith rather than Andrew Nathan that the CCP's supposed institutionalization and shift to collective leadership in recent decades have been mostly superficial (“Authoritarian Resilience Revisited: Joseph Fewsmith with Response from Andrew J. Nathan,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 28(116), 2019).

Although there is some truth to the idea that strong autocratic leaders can champion reforms or even create revolutionary change, the book's proposed framework is at times unclear or inconsistent. For instance, Guo does not explain who decides if and how a party leader qualifies as a core leader. Sometimes the decision seems to be made by the party—which itself is not a monolith—but at other times it is clearly made by the author himself. For example, party leaders designated Jiang Zemin as the core leader in the 1990s, but Guo rejects this designation (p. 61). Guo's criteria for core-ness are also subjective. Did Mao really govern better than Jiang did? Guo himself admits, “Commanding the party during the eras of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao required a political skillset unlike that of Mao and Deng” (p. 200). Moreover, core-ness conflates a leader's political success, governance competence, morality, charisma, and other traits, skating over the fact that these characteristics have often been at odds (p. 112). If virtuous strongman rule is the “ideal” in Chinese political thought, then why before 2015 was it so common to hear arguments that collective leadership was one of the keys to the CCP's success (e.g., Hu Angang, *China's Collective Leadership*, 2015)? Surely many sophisticated Chinese thinkers can distinguish between powerful leaders and good ones.

Partly as a result of these problems, the book's framework fails to explain why some Chinese leaders have become core leaders and others have not. The observation that party elites will crowd in with collective leadership or factionalism if a party leader is weak is not evidence of a cyclical and self-regulating political system but rather a truism (p. 13). Guo claims that the CCP leadership was “forced” to choose a strong leader in Xi and that Xi's consolidation of power “is not surprising” (pp. 4, 48). But then why did the far greater crisis of 1989 not force such a decision as well with Jiang's appointment (p. 204)? And was Xi's personalization of power really so predictable? Some experienced China watchers predicted that Xi would be a weak leader who would have to make compromises (e.g., Cheng Li, “The Powerful Factions among China's Rulers,” *Brookings*, 2012). The alleged causal logic is further obscured by Guo's anthropomorphizing of the political system. It is unclear who exactly is doing what and why it is the “system” itself that supposedly “fears chaos,” “desires” a strong leader, and “grants permission” to the

party leader to develop a faction (pp. 282, 283, 261). Finally, by repeatedly stating that core status is “earned,” Guo risks giving the misleading impression that elite Chinese politics is some form of moral meritocracy, as opposed to a largely amoral power struggle (pp. 3, 13, 79). It is doubtful, for example, that it was conservative Chen Yun's “unselfish moral personality that most compelled other high-ranking leaders to follow and support him” (p. 127). Whatever its strengths, Chen's morality did not prevent Mao from politically isolating him in the late 1950s.

Despite these critiques, I recommend that China scholars read and engage with Guo's study for two reasons. First, it is chock-full of useful information and analysis on everything from the ancient origins of the mentor system to the political behavior of princelings. Second and more importantly, Guo's framework for understanding elite Chinese politics articulates a real and influential—though far from the only—perspective on leadership in Chinese political thought. In sum, this book makes a contribution but also leaves room for further penetrating research on the topic of elite Chinese politics.

LGBTI Rights in Turkey: Sexuality and the State in the Middle East. By Fait Muedini. Cambridge: Cambridge University

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Since the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights and activism have been under siege. Notable examples include the consecutive bans of the Istanbul Pride marches since 2016, as well as the governor of Ankara's ban on any LGBTI-themed events in the capital. Against this political background and considering the scant scholarly attention given to the issues so far, *LGBTI Rights in Turkey* is a welcome contribution to the literature on LGBTI rights and politics outside the Western world.

The book's primary purpose is to “explore the various facets of LGBTI rights in Turkey, shedding light not only on rights abuses but also on how actors are “working to improve conditions for sexual minorities” (p. 6). To do so, it presents a history of human rights abuses within Turkey, provides an overview of the current legal status of LGBTI people, and documents and discusses a variety of strategies pursued by those actors fighting for LGBTI equality. Additionally, Fait Muedini is interested in the “relationship between the use of religion and [LGBTI] human rights” (p. 6), particularly in how different actors use religion in opposition to LGBTI equality and how LGBTI activists employ religious-based arguments.

The role of religion serves as a key point of focus and a scope condition of the research. This is in part because of the way in which Muedini structures the argument.

Chapter 1, for example, introduces the reader to the topic by drawing attention to the links between Islam and homosexuality in Turkey, but with reference to (as well as embedding the argument within) the wider “Muslim World.” After making empirical observations of homophobia within Muslim communities, the wider Muslim world, and Turkey, Muedini draws our attention to what the conversations within Islam and Islamic jurisprudence have to say on homosexuality. Based on the assumption that it is these debates within Islam that drive anti-LGBT attitudes, Muedini then shifts attention to how religion can be used to create social change. To set up this argument, he finishes this chapter with a discussion of how Islam has been reinterpreted to demonstrate an acceptance of LGBTI rights and how these reinterpretations could and should be used in activism in Turkey.

One of the greatest contributions made by *LGBTI Rights in Turkey* is the encyclopedic mapping of the current state of LGBT politics in Turkey. Chapter 2, for example, provides an extensive overview of the discrimination, inequalities, and violence experienced by LGBTI people in Turkey in different spheres of life. This overview touches on the use of homophobic language by political leaders, the types of violent crimes against the LGBTI community, discrimination in the field of employment, and media restrictions. Muedini must be applauded for the special attention this chapter gives to the experiences of LGBTI refugees in Turkey, as well as members of the trans* community, who remain one of the most vulnerable groups in the country (and remain underrepresented in most scholarship).

Muedini presents a detailed overview of the existing legal framework and activists’ strategies in Turkey, with special attention to the use of (digital) media and electoral strategies, as well as links between activists and different political actors. The author provides detailed profile descriptions of several LGBT politicians who have been elected in local and national elections. Here, the book’s most important analytical contribution is that it draws attention to the local level and how activists can find several entry points into politics to advocate for LGBTI rights. Although at the national level homophobia may be frequently used in statecraft processes, these tactics do not necessarily trickle down to the local levels of the state. Finally, the book also provides an overview of a wide array of other areas of work pursued by activists, including the provision of services and transnational networks, as well as different challenges activists might encounter.

Because of the wide range of topics it seeks to cover, however, *LGBTI Rights in Turkey* becomes very descriptive, losing much of its analytical power. This is not helped by Muedini’s failure to embed his analysis within the ever-growing literature on LGBTI activism and politics in a variety of fields, including political science and sociology. For example, in chapter 4, in which Muedini discusses

potential activist strategies, the rich sociological literature on identity politics (e.g. Mary Bernstein, “Celebration and Suppression: The Strategic Uses of Identity by the Lesbian and Gay Movement,” *American Journal of Sociology* 103 [3], 1997) and on the relationships between LGBT movements and the state (*The Lesbian and Gay Movement and the State: Comparative Insights into a Transformed Relationship*, edited by Manon Tremblay and colleagues, 2011) does not feature. Consequently, the chapter leads to an uncritical exposition of empirical examples of what activists in different parts of the world (with a predominant focus on the West) have done to promote LGBT equality. And although Muedini rightfully notes that some of these strategies are not always transferrable from one context to another, he does seem to take their analytical power for granted while not fully exploring the theoretical debates that surround these strategies.

The second shortcoming of the book relates to Muedini’s preoccupation with religion, the exploration of which he admits was a driving force behind his research (p. 21). He seems to have an undeniable desire to demonstrate how using religious arguments is an effective method for LGBTI activists to fight for social change (p. 216), but yet he does not have the empirical evidence to back up this claim. This raises serious questions about whether Muedini (unwittingly?) reproduces the essentializing idea that anti-LGBTI politics in Turkey (and in the wider Muslim world) are the direct product of Islam. Rather than interrogating how religion is used politically, Muedini’s approach at times reads as an analysis of Turkey (but, as the book’s subtitle suggests, also the Middle East) in which Islamic culture is reproduced as the West’s homophobic other. Although I assume that such a Western gaze was not the author’s intention, it nevertheless emerges, because Muedini unfortunately does not consider the existing critical literature on sexuality and the Middle East or on LGBT and sexuality studies more generally. For example, he seems to attribute the anti-LGBT politics of the AKP to the party’s Islamic nature and its particular interpretation of Islam (p. 34) while not considering the existing debates on political homophobia (Michael Bosia, “Strange Fruit: Homophobia, the State, and the Politics of LGBT Rights and Capabilities,” *Journal of Human Rights*, 13[3], 2014; Meredith Weiss and Michael Bosia, eds., *Global Homophobia: States, Movements, and the Politics of Oppression*, 2013); on homonationalism (Jasbit Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, 2007); homocolonialism (Momin Rahman, “Queer Rights and the Triangulation of Western Exceptionalism,” *Journal of Human Rights*, 13[3], 2014); or on threat perception (Phillip Ayoub, “With Arms Wide Shut: Threat Perception, Norm Reception, and Mobilized Resistance to LGBT Rights,” *Journal of Human Rights*, 13[3], 2014). Such an engagement would allow the author to explore how both religion

and homophobia can be instrumentalized as part of wider political processes and thus avoid some of the essentializing tendencies of the book.

This lack of engagement with the relevant literatures brings me to the final shortcoming of the book: its use of language, which suggests a rather limited understanding of the complexities of sexualities and LGBT politics. Muedini uses LGBTI rights, same-sex rights, and sexual orientation rights seemingly interchangeably throughout the book. Doing so not only ignores the existing debates on the usefulness of the label “LGBTI” as an analytical tool (e.g., Jon Binnie and Christian Klesse, “Solidarities and Tensions: Feminism and Transnational LGBTQ Politics in Poland,” *European Journal for Women’s Studies*, 19[4], 2012), but these slippages further erase the differences between the different groups that the different letters of the acronym refer to, as well as remaining blind to the different processes of exclusion experienced by these groups. This is particularly unfortunate given that Muedini does spend *considerable* attention on the trans* community and their activism. By reducing LGBTI to same-sex rights, Muedini’s choice of words reinforces and reifies a lack of inclusiveness that remains all too present in some parts of the movement and even in scholarship, which remains preoccupied and dominated by gay men.

In sum, *LGBTI Rights in Turkey* draws attention to an understudied issue in comparative politics area and provides a good description of the current state of LGBTI rights, activism, and opposition in Turkey. Its descriptive nature and the breadth of the topics covered make the book an invaluable resource for scholars interested in LGBTI rights in Turkey. However, the book’s lack of engagement with the existing literature and its focus on description rather than analysis limit its intellectual contributions.

Party Vibrancy and Democracy in Latin America. By Fernando Rosenblatt. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 304p. \$78.00 cloth.
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Vibrant parties are those that “retain intense attachment among activists” (p. 6) even in between electoral cycles. Fernando Rosenblatt argues that four factors—Purpose (P), Trauma (T), channels of Ambition (A), and moderate Exit barriers (E)—explain party vibrancy. He applies this framework to 12 important parties in three consolidated democracies in Latin America: Chile, Costa Rica, and Uruguay. The empirical evidence consists of 221 in-depth interviews with leaders of those parties (conducted between 2010 and 2013, when no electoral contests took place) and secondary sources on each party’s historical evolution.

The PTAE framework draws on Albert Hirschman’s exit-voice-loyalty analysis of organizations. Purpose is the capacity of the party to unite leaders and members around a project, program, or worldview, thus producing “prospective loyalty.” Purpose may not last over extended periods, because the need to adapt to changing contexts and shocks often makes parties abandon their ideologies. Trauma refers to a shared experience of suffering by the founding members of the party, typically because of civil war (Costa Rica) or government repression (Chile and Uruguay). It produces “retrospective loyalty,” although, like Purpose, it tends to erode over time as the traumatic events become distant memories.

Emotional loyalty may provide the initial basis for vibrancy, but eventually more rational-materialistic incentives are needed. Channels of Ambition mean that the party satisfies the career goals of its activists and leaders, which is reflected in reasonable levels of intraparty elite renewal. Barriers to Exit exert a curvilinear effect on vibrancy: if they are too low or too high, the party will suffer many defections as soon as it faces problems or oligarchic ossification, respectively; if they are moderate, vibrancy will be bolstered because “exits” will be uncommon but will still function as an effective alert mechanism.

The first part of the book poses the research questions, lays out the PTAE theory (plus rival hypotheses), and describes the qualitative research design. The second part dedicates a chapter to each country, with sections on their political parties; a fourth chapter synthesizes the findings of the country and party case studies. The third part consists of the concluding chapter, which summarizes the overall findings; briefly explores their possible applications to Venezuela’s AD, Brazil’s PT, and a few parties beyond the region; elaborates on the remaining research challenges; and reflects on the complex relationship between party vibrancy and democratic consolidation.

The book’s empirical evidence is probably its main strength. The author conducted more than 70 long interviews in each country with all types of politicians, from former presidents to young activists. This rich source of primary data, with a focus on recent years, is well complemented by materials from secondary sources on the more distant past. The descriptive side of this evidence offers conclusions about some of Latin America’s most iconic parties that are far from obvious. The pinochetist UDI is the only party that obtains PTAE (capital letters indicate the presence of a causal condition; lowercase letters its absence) and is therefore the most vibrant party in the sample (although the author questions whether the assassination of its founding leader Jaime Guzmán by leftist guerrillas can be equated to civil war or repression). Interestingly, UDI’s coalitional partner RN appears at the opposite extreme, along with Costa Rica’s PUSC—both obtain ptae. All the main Uruguayan parties are vibrant, whereas none of the Costa Rican or Chilean parties are