

insightful part of the book (Chapter 2, “Purity As an Embodiment of Security?”).

The book also covers the politics of two actors directly concerned with the ongoing discrimination against Christians in Egypt: the Coptic Church and Coptic immigrants whose numbers have been growing for decades. Under the energetic and domineering leadership of Pope Shenuda III, the Coptic Church expanded its authority from the ecclesiastical to the secular spheres of life, instituted a network of social services catering to the least fortunate members of the community, and became—in the person of its head, the pope—the main political representative of its flock. In essence, Shenuda delivered the Coptic vote for the ruling party under former President Mubarak; what he hoped to get in return was influence over government decisions affecting Copts. Shenuda did certainly garner some political weight, but his alliance with the Mubarak regime was always unequal considering the asymmetry of force unfavorable to the Coptic side.

Contra the attitude of the Church “at home,” activist Coptic immigrants became convinced that the Egyptian state would never be serious about the Coptic question and lobbied foreign governments, especially the United States, to intervene in favor of the beleaguered Christians. Guirguis analyzes the strategies of both Coptic actors and their tense relations with one another: The Church found it prudent to distance itself from activists abroad, whereas the latter accused priests of cowardice and questioned the wisdom of their attitudes vis-à-vis power, which they considered meek. Thus, the book offers an overview of the internal dynamics and rivalries operating within the Coptic Church and community, in addition to analyzing Coptic politics and Christian–Muslim relations in Egypt at large.

Having laid out different aspects of the Coptic plight in Egypt, the book does not venture into thinking through possible solutions or strategies for action. Should Christians in Egypt keep betting on an eventual secularization of society that would eventually save them from the inferior status that has been theirs historically? And if so, what are the realistic chances of such a strategy in a society still deeply structured by Islam? Should they, by contrast, adopt a more confrontational approach and maybe lobby for a quota guaranteeing their representation in the system? Their Lebanese brethren do have a quota of their own in Lebanon’s institutions, but they once formed 50% of Lebanese society and still represent around 35% of it today. The Copts do not have the same demographic weight and never enjoyed the preponderance that the Christians in Lebanon once had.

If there is a solution for the Coptic question in Egypt, it is not clear what it is or could be. And so perhaps the silence of Laure Guirguis on this particular matter should not be held against the book. In the end, *Copts and the Security State* is a must-read for anyone interested

in Egypt, the Copts, and the long-suffering Middle Eastern Christians.

**Money for Votes: The Causes and Consequences of Electoral Clientelism in Africa.** By Eric Kramon. Cambridge:

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— Nic Cheeseman, *University of Birmingham*

In this concise and well-argued book, Eric Kramon seeks to explain the causes and consequences of electoral clientelism in Kenya. Those who do not spend their lives thinking about electoral behavior and elections on the African continent may be forgiven for wondering if we need another book on the topic. After all, studies of clientelism, patronage, and ethnic voting have proliferated since the reintroduction of multiparty politics in sub-Saharan Africa in the late 1990s. The good news is that just a few pages into *Money for Votes*, it becomes clear that we very much do need another volume on this topic—and will need more still—because Kramon does not just play into existing debates; he turns them on their heads. Instead of viewing the exchange of cash between political candidates and citizens as vote buying, he argues that it is better understood as a “mechanism through which politicians convey *information* to voters” (p. 3; emphasis in the original).

In adopting this new lens, Kramon deconstructs the myth that all that happens during the exchange of cash, services, and gifts around elections is that one individual sells his or her vote to another. Instead, he suggests that electoral hand-outs (and the like) are important because they enable candidates to demonstrate their credibility, that is, their capacity to link their constituents to networks of power and resources—what Joel Barkan called “political linkage.” This approach is intuitively appealing because anyone who has closely observed an election campaign in a country like Kenya—the case study that Kramon uses to demonstrate his argument—knows that young candidates give out money and gifts not because they believe it will help them win the next election but because they know that it is essential for establishing their profile as a viable leader of the future. They also know that voters typically see such gifts as essential and legitimate components of a long-term relationship between a leader and their community, not as being optional extras that candidates can provide if they want. As a result, this is a book that will be celebrated by scholars who are frustrated by the tendency in the literature to present overly reductive and simplistic analyses of “vote buying.”

In addition to doing a better job of fitting the lived reality of African elections, there are four other reasons why the book is persuasive.

First, Kramon does an excellent job of tracing his own ideas through a rich intellectual lineage. This includes

important Africanists such as Barkan, whose careful analysis of Kenyan politics demonstrated that one-party elections were essentially referenda on the development performance of the member of Parliament. Significantly, Kramon also includes comparativists and those who understand politics from a more anthropological approach, such as Frederick Schaffer, whose analysis of the way in which individuals understand vote buying has inspired a new wave of research on the meaning that these political rituals have for those who participate in them.

Second, the idea that electoral exchanges are really about demonstrating credibility is embedded within a broader “informational” approach. In Chapter 3, which fleshes out the theoretical framework of the book, Kramon explains why he finds “transactional” approaches to clientelism to be too narrow. Rather than conceptualizing vote buying as the simple purchasing of electoral support, he argues that “politicians distribute electoral handouts to convey information to voters who are uncertain about which candidates will best serve their interests” (p. 48). In other words, their aim “is not to buy something, but rather to send signals about the kind of politician that they are” (p. 49). This is a persuasive approach because it roots clientelistic exchanges in a much broader web of cultural and social understanding, that is, in relation to practices of gift giving, local beliefs about what constitutes good leadership, and the developmental focus of first-past-the-post constituency-based elections.

Third, the book uses a range of complementary methodological approaches to test key propositions. Survey data is used throughout, as is qualitative analysis of the Kenyan case, and in chapters five and seven this is supplemented by experimental evidence – from field experiments that used radio recordings of hypothetical candidates – that will ease the mind of those who worry about causality and endogeneity. Taken together, this represents a strong and persuasive evidence base for Kramon’s argument.

Finally, it is worth noting that the prose is particularly fine. As a result, complex arguments are made accessible to both seasoned academics and new students, something that should ease the book’s journey onto comparative politics reading lists at both undergraduate and Masters levels.

Of course, no manuscript is perfect, and there are avenues that Kramon could profitably have gone down but instead passes over in order to present a tight and focused monograph. Most obviously, the title of the book follows a recent trend in that it frames an in-depth study of one county as an argument about Africa. It is likely that many of the arguments here can be extended beyond the Kenyan case, especially in Anglophone first-past-the-post political systems, but very little is done in the introduction or conclusion to substantiate the shift from “Kenya” to “Africa.” This is significant, as the same

argument may not apply nearly as well in proportional electoral systems, or in countries in which “Big Man” politics is less developed, or indeed in states with a stronger party system. The absence of a more thorough effort to test the argument in other countries, or to set out clearer scope conditions, means that the reader is not always quite sure how far Kramon wishes to push his claims, or how far they can travel. Broad titles no doubt increase a book’s appeal, but they also risk homogenizing a very diverse continent.

Less obviously, there are some valuable literatures that do not make it into the book, but which would have strengthened the discussion. Following Schaffer further, for example, could have led to a deeper analysis of the impact of norms. It is clear that both “transactional” and “informational” approaches have much to tell us about when and how leaders make handouts, but it is also possible that candidates are constrained by the expectations of voters, and that these are changing in important ways. Kramon does a good job of talking about what voters want and how this is shaped by past experience, but says little about how attitudes toward the legitimacy of different forms of clientelistic exchange may be shaped by recent electoral experience and civic education programs that emphasize the importance of not selling one’s vote, which have the potential to reshape what it means to be a good leader. In this regard, it would have enriched the argument to engage with the work of Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan and colleagues on corruption and “practical norms,” and on the reasons why so many people publicly denounce a system that they themselves participate in and help to sustain. It is precisely this tension that lies at the heart of electoral clientelism.

These points do not detract from the quality and relevance of Kramon’s analysis, however. He has pushed the debate in a valuable new direction, and it is for others to follow his lead and fill in the remaining gaps. In doing so, they will often have cause to return to *Money for Votes*, which, with its striking combination of clarity and innovation, will serve as a key touchstone in the debate for years to come.

**Constituent Assemblies.** Edited by Jon Elster, Roberto Gargarella, Vatsal Naresh, and Bjørn Erik Rasch. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 252p. \$110.00 cloth.  
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— Wayne D. Moore, *Virginia Tech*

This collection of essays contributes to the study of constitutional reform from comparative perspective. Its particular focus is on the roles of constituent assemblies in drafting new or revised constitutional texts, primarily at the national level. Considering its relative compactness compared to similar works, this volume has commendable scope geographically, temporally, and theoretically.