

The theoretical framework developed in the book is a meaningful contribution to the literature. It builds on Richard Richardson and Kenneth Vines's work on legal and democratic subcultures (p. 7). The legal subculture is centered on protecting judges from political pressure. The democratic subculture suggests that judges should mirror the preferences of the citizens. Kritzer argues that the tension between the legal and democratic subcultures is strongest in state courts because of the incredible variation in selection mechanisms and tenure (p. 11). This perspective is implemented throughout the book and linked to the "partisan politics" and "good government" debate. It is a clever framework through which to evaluate reform efforts.

Through his research, Kritzer identifies four major impetuses for reform efforts: political realignment/misalignment, scandal, litigation, and court modernization. Each of the four drivers is illustrated in the case studies throughout the book. Kritzer creates a systematic categorization of partisanship in 32 reform efforts, and he shows that there has been a shift in the role of partisanship over time (p. 351). Prior to 2000, the role of partisanship was minimal, but it increased significantly after 1999.

Another major contribution of the book is that Kritzer moves beyond simply discussing selection system types. He also considers the other rules that impact judicial selection in the states. For example, changes to nominating commissions and the timing of elections are a few of the other lesser-studied topics considered.

In addition to the rich theoretical framework through which reform efforts are considered and the comprehensive set of case studies, Kritzer also includes a thorough discussion of the history of judicial selection in the states, which makes this book approachable for a broad audience. This book is an incredible achievement and a valuable contribution to the literature on state courts. It informs the discussion of judicial reform and effectively demonstrates the drivers of and hurdles facing reform efforts.

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**Decadent Developmentalism: The Political Economy of Democratic Brazil** by Matthew M. Taylor. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2020. 340 pp. \$99.99.

Representations of Brazil in the media and the academy have long oscillated between it being a country full of promise, at one pole, and it being a hopeless land of frustrated potential, at the other. This ambivalence is perhaps best

reflected in the famous phrase “Brazil is the country of the future—and always will be.” The puzzle, then, is why Brazil has for so long combined promise and frustration, success and failure—and what it would take for the country to reach a more productive equilibrium.

In *Decadent Developmentalism*, Matthew M. Taylor provides a forceful solution to that puzzle. In a nutshell, he argues that Brazil is caught in a low-level equilibrium sustained by the ideas and legacies of developmentalism, the political institutions of the democratic regime, and the economic interests of business insiders. Significant institutional complementarities within and across the economic and political systems reinforce this equilibrium, in arenas as diverse as fiscal, industrial, tax, labor, and monetary policy; what Taylor calls the “developmental hierarchical market economy”; coalitional presidentialism; the electoral and party systems; campaign finance; and the bureaucracy. These complementarities make ambitious reforms that could turn Brazil into a more prosperous and fairer society less likely to emerge and succeed. Yet, the same complementarities that keep Brazil from reaching its potential make it possible that change in one arena could spur a rapid shift in the overall equilibrium.

I thoroughly enjoyed *Decadent Developmentalism*, and I found it full of insights useful not just for those who seek to understand Brazil but also for researchers of the developmental state and the varieties of capitalism. The book’s theoretical framework makes it possible to understand uniquely Brazilian paradoxes, such as the fact that business elites often complain about the costs of doing business while benefiting from massive yet opaque subsidies from the government; the coexistence of a strong and capable civil service bureaucracy with many high-level patronage appointees; or how corruption in the country is characterized by high levels of both prosecution (in the courts and in the media) and impunity. Taylor backs his argument with careful research spanning the fields of political science, economics, public administration, law, and history; deep, firsthand knowledge of the country; and numerous qualitative interviews with Brazilian stakeholders.

That said, the book would have benefited from further discussion of the issue of change. Taylor suggests that for Brazil to get to a more productive equilibrium, reforms should start with the developmental state and coalitional presidentialism. Still, he provides no insights into how political reform could succeed given the complementarities he describes. Political entrepreneurs currently abound in Brazil, but how should they act to transform the country for the better? One hypothesis that would be consistent with the book’s argument is that a reform coalition could be built around business and labor outsiders, as well as bureaucratic insiders. Relatedly, while Taylor only considers two alternative equilibria, namely “a more effective

developmental state or a more market-oriented ‘neoliberal’ state” (p. 247), other paths are possible. The recent Chilean experience suggests that a shift toward a populist equilibrium cannot be ruled out. The erosion of democratic norms, practices, and institutions in Brazil (whose V-Dem scores have markedly declined since 2016, when President Dilma Rousseff was impeached) suggests that a shift toward a more authoritarian equilibrium is not merely a hypothetical possibility. These two alternatives are, of course, not mutually exclusive.

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**Assault on Democracy: Communism, Fascism, and Authoritarianism during the Interwar Years** by Kurt Weyland. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2021. 385 pp. Paper, \$34.99.

Understanding the huge wave of authoritarianism that swept across Europe in the 1920s and 1930s has never seemed more relevant. Kurt Weyland has written a highly original and deeply researched study grappling with one of the oldest questions of comparative politics: why do some countries withstand the challenge to their democratic orders, while others slide into authoritarianism? His answer focuses on elite choices in the face of the dual assaults of communism and fascism. For most countries in Eastern and Southern Europe, elites found both left- and right-wing extremism frightening. The modal result was neither revolution of the left nor the right but demobilizing authoritarian rule that sought to defang both. It is this “double deterrent” of communism and fascism that makes the politics of the first wave unique and interesting.

In *Assault on Democracy*, Weyland acknowledges the conventional distributional and ethnic cleavages that destabilized democratic rule virtually everywhere, but his theoretical approach draws less on the classics of political economy and sociology than on the insights of behavioral and cognitive psychology. His actors are “boundedly rational” and subject to cognitive shortcuts, such as “availability” heuristics, which in experimental conditions show that dramatic events lead people to change their behavior more than they should if they were thinking in terms of statistical probabilities, and “loss aversion,” which causes subjects to weigh potential losses more heavily than gains. The impact of these two constants played out across the globe. Swept off their feet by the epic Russian Revolution, radical leftists in many countries, from Estonia to Latin America, called for insurrection,

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