

**Libya's Qaddafi: The Politics of Contradiction.** By Mansour O. El-Kikhia. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997. 213p. \$49.95.

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During the last decade, the literature on the rentier—or allocative or distributive—state has produced a growing number of works investigating the effect of commodity booms on the political and economic fortunes of numerous developing countries. Because of the extraordinary size and effect of hydrocarbons in several of those countries, oil exporters in particular have been the subject of intense—albeit often somewhat inconsistent and largely descriptive—studies. Two recent works (Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty*, 1997, and Kiren Aziz Chaudhry, *The Price of Wealth*, 1997) synthesize many of those earlier findings in an interpretive and heuristic fashion that insightfully reveals how a combination of history, rapid inflows of revenues, and institutional development (or lack thereof) produces uniquely structured “petro-states.”

Arguably, no single country in the Middle East and North Africa has suffered more under the deleterious effect of that combination of factors than Libya. The legacy of a brutal colonial experience and the coincidence of state-building and sudden influx of exogenous capital saddled the country since its independence in 1951 with two rulers (Idris al-Sanusi and Muammar al-Qadhafi) whose often-voiced suspicions of the modern state, with its vertically integrated bureaucratic structures, exacerbated the tendency prevalent in most rentier states to use revenues in ways that are politically expedient but, most often, economically ruinous.

In *Libya's Qaddafi*, Mansour El-Kikhia aims to explain how precisely Libya's current ruler has accomplished the latter through what he defines as “the politics of contradiction” (p. 5): the creation of political turbulence and continual chaos that allows the regime to ensure its survival while effectively shielding itself from the actual ongoing turmoil (and, although less explicitly stated, by engaging in large-scale regime-sponsored patronage that relegates most Libyans to the political and economic sidelines). Although a short introductory chapter summarizes the basic argument, the book unfortunately contains no abstract framework that clearly sets forth what the author hopes to investigate or achieve beyond chronicling the turbulence of Libyan politics, or one that would allow the reader to compare implicitly its alleged uniqueness against examples of political and economic development in other rentier states. For readers interested in such questions, Lisa Anderson's now decade-old account (*The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya 1830–1980*, 1986) remains the most insightful one available.

The strength of El-Kikhia's account is that it provides a thorough, albeit descriptive and at times even speculative, rendering of Libya's recent and current political and economic history. Such is the paucity of serious works on Libya that this achievement alone should not be underestimated. But for social scientists who have closely observed Libya, this book will raise a number of serious questions regarding its evidence and interpretation thereof. In light of the fact that research in Libya is virtually impossible, it is perhaps hard to fault the author for relying so extensively on second-hand sources, even though some of those have become quite suspect and outdated by now, and even though first-hand written documentation is more abundant and available than the author claims.

Evidence, however, informs interpretation, and in this particular case it leads to a number of assertions this reviewer would dispute. Perhaps one example suffices to make the

point. El-Kikhia argues that Qadhafi has constructed a powerful neopatrimonial society (my words) in Libya. In language that recalls a by now traditional interpretation in Middle East studies, he asserts that the Libyan leader has done so by increasingly gathering around himself tribal support in order to stay in power in a divide-and-rule fashion. A good part of the book, and its appendix entirely, is taken up therefore in examining and documenting the growing role of the Qadhafia tribe in Libyan politics as evidence of this neopatrimonial society. This, however, represents an incomplete explanation that obfuscates simultaneously the process, structure, and evolution of Libyan politics and society since 1969.

In reality, and although Qadhafia members have become more prominent, the country's informal power structure, which El-Kikhia correctly identifies as the locus of real power (pp. 5–6), is permeated by scores of non-Qadhafia citizens whom the Libyan leader has deliberately cultivated as a means of offsetting the potential power of any institutionalized group, including his own tribe. In addition, El-Kikhia's analysis ignores a crucial development that has been heightened since 1969: the way in which Libyan society, due in part to policies fostered by Qadhafi but also because of the intense individual rent-seeking that has taken place, has become much more differentiated than a purely tribal scenario accounts or allows for. The notion that Libyan society is increasingly reverting back to tribal politics (p. 103), and the apocalyptic vision that pits tribes against one another in a struggle for survival in a post-Qadhafi situation, is therefore highly problematic. It ignores the profound reality that tribes in what eventually became Libya have never, not even during the disastrous colonial encounter, served as a sustained and coherent focus for opposition, and they show no real signs of doing so now.

Undoubtedly, this book will appeal to many readers who, for a number of reasons, share the author's interpretations and his conviction that Libya resembles nothing less than a predatory state that is unfortunately (mis)guided by a ruler whose actions often have been, both nationally and internationally, “beyond the realm of the rational” (p. xiv). While *Libya's Qaddafi* is a welcome addition to the literature, primarily for some of the insights it contains regarding the minutiae of politics in the country under Qadhafi, it should be read with a good deal of caution. It is a courageous work by an individual whose family has suffered considerably at the hands of the Qadhafi regime, but it is not the “completely evenhanded” account its dustcover touts. It also does not, despite the valuable information it contains, in the end provide the kind of comprehensive and more structural analysis that would allow an academic audience to better understand the author's central theses about the continuity in Libyan politics, or how Qadhafi's “politics of contradiction” flow logically from and reinforce that continuity.

**The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe.** By Stathis N. Kalyvas. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996. 300p. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

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Christian democracy has been one of Western Europe's most successful political movements, yet it has long been neglected in comparative politics. This book is a welcome and innovative contribution to the field. It analyzes the origins of confessional parties in Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, and Italy and explains why such a party was not successful in France. It not only provides a genuinely com-

parative account of the conditions under which these parties arose but also offers a theory of party formation that is potentially valuable in other contexts. A major strength of the book is its rare combination of an analytical framework rooted in rational choice theory and a detailed historical and comparative account of critical cases.

The study starts with an explanation of a peculiar fact that has puzzled the (scarce) literature, namely, that both the church and conservatives opposed the political mobilization of lay Catholics, but confessional parties nevertheless emerged. Kalyvas solves this puzzle in an elegant manner. He identifies the crucial actors, maps out their preferences, and develops a strategic model of party formation that explains the puzzling result. His thesis is that confessional party formation was the contingent and unintended outcome of the strategic moves made by the Catholic Church and conservative politicians in response to the liberal anticlericalism of the late nineteenth century. The author convincingly shows that the rational calculus of costs and benefits by the church and the conservatives in this "game" led them both to oppose the formation of confessional parties.

In the light of the liberal assault, the church preferred to follow a strategy of compromise because the creation of mass organizations of lay Catholics would produce prohibitively large negative externalities. The church traditionally controlled its members through hierarchy and centralization. But mass mobilization would break this unity and subvert hierarchy by allowing the lower clergy and lay Catholics to become independent of the episcopate. The problem, of course, was that the liberals were unwilling to compromise and instead intensified their attack on the church's power in society. Given the ineffectiveness of the numerous attempts at a compromise, the church was eventually forced to choose the organizational strategy for its defense and to participate in the political process. But even political participation of lay Catholics involved substantial costs, such as a further weakening of the bond between the church and its members, a loss of control, and a possible backlash against Catholicism as an effect of politicizing religion.

The conservatives' preference was to continue their participation in the political game and to find a way to call a halt to the liberal advance. The conservatives, however, lacked the resources and the salient issues necessary for mass mobilization. Moreover, mobilization also appeared too costly for them. The liberal attack against the church itself created the opportunity for avoiding these costs, however. Religion potentially was an electoral asset, and the organizational powers of the church could be used as a political resource. Neither the church nor the conservatives, however, favored the formation of Catholic parties. The conservatives feared that the permanent politicization of religion and the association with the church would restrict their autonomy. The church feared the confessional party because it shifted the source of power of activists from the church to the voters. Moreover, it diluted the hierarchical relation between church and activists and therefore threatened to reduce the influence of the church in society.

The author shows how the interacting strategies of the two main actors opposed to the formation of confessional parties paradoxically produced the unwanted outcome. First, the church took centralized control over the existing yet loosely organized associations of lay Catholics and thus created the Catholic social movement. Next, provoked by increasing anticlericalism, the movement rapidly politicized, especially when the church decided to use its organizational capacity in support of those conservative politicians who agreed to defend the church's interests. This participation strategy

unintendedly produced two new actors (lay Catholic activists and politically active priests) as well as a new identity (political Catholicism). Finally, the prochurch coalitions unexpectedly turned out to be electorally successful. As a result, political Catholicism gained a momentum that went beyond the control of the church. Electoral success provided the mechanism of transition to the formation of confessional parties. The author shows that these sequences constituted the general pattern in five nations but not in France. Contrary to conventional explanations that stress the decline of religiosity, Kalyvas argues that it was a series of electoral defeats of the prochurch coalitions that prevented the formation of a confessional party in this country.

A second major argument of this study is that the formation of confessional parties reinforced a distinctive Catholic political identity which not only reinterpreted Catholicism in much less doctrinal terms but also started to challenge the religious primacy of the church in political matters. As a result, political Catholicism became separated from the church and religion. "Thus, in a paradoxical way, the politicization of religion contributed to the secularization of politics" (p. 245).

The analyses are generally convincing, and there is only one major quibble. The author does not explain why only the church and the conservatives are included in the model as actors with preferences and strategies and why the lower clergy and the lay Catholic activists are treated as merely by-products of the strategic actions of the main actors. One reason the church was and remained so vehemently opposed to the formation of confessional parties is, in my view, that lay Catholics and priests were already mobilizing politically long before the church decided to follow the participation strategy. The conservatives and the church reacted not only to the liberals but also to the grassroot activism of Catholics themselves. This activism not only was prompted by anticlericalism but also was a response to the effects of industrialization, a topic largely neglected in this study. Social Catholicism now wrongly appears to have been created by the church, while in reality the presence of social Catholics changed the very calculus of the church and the conservatives. This otherwise fascinating study tends to shed insufficient light on the crucial effect of a third actor. The model seems therefore incomplete because it ironically excludes the only actor in favor of the formation of a confessional party.

**The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis.** By Herbert Kitschelt. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. 332p. \$49.50.

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Kitschelt deals with three variants of the radical right in seven countries: France with the National Front as the "prototype of the New Radical Right"; Austria and Italy ("blending new right appeals into a broad populist antiestablishment strategy"); Germany, Norway, and Denmark, with a "milder version of the new radical right"; and Britain, with the National Front as a failing case. The theoretical framework is contained in two theoretical chapters dealing with alternative explanations as well, and it is taken up again in two final chapters, with the country studies in between. Dealing with so few cases in so many variations and (almost by necessity) following a sampling procedure on the dependent variable may easily create problems of design, theoretical explanation, and empirical inference. These do not fade away when taking Kitschelt's earlier book (*The Transformation of European Social Democracy*, 1994) as a companion volume that uses the