

workers want to be involved in management decisions as a way of exercising their “voice.” The design of labor market institutions and collective bargaining arrangements shapes the extent to which unions can derive the institutional power needed to constrain exit options for employers, such as layoffs and outsourcing, and give voice to workers; for example, by sitting on company boards. Doellgast thus places more emphasis on institutional forms of power than Rothstein, but the third central factor of her analysis— inclusive solidarity—adds contingency and complexity to the argument in ways that complement rather than compete with the causal logic of *Recoding Power*. Put simply, labor-friendly institutions certainly help workers represent their interests, but without a shared sense of a common fate, employers can still pit them off against each other.

Doellgast demonstrates the confluence of institutional and associational power in labor management dynamics in the telecom sector across 10 countries in Europe and the United States. The telecom sector offers fertile ground for Doellgast to investigate how working people resist liberalizing demands in a particularly challenged environment characterized by enhanced global competition, increased shareholder value orientation, declining market shares, and (partial) privatizations that caused radical job restructuring plans to move forward across the board. The case studies’ focus on company-level dynamics accounts for the diverse national-level labor market institutions and sectoral industrial relations in which unions find themselves.

The comparative overview of the book highlights the power-distributional implications of institutional legacies in favor of workers. However, even in labor-friendly institutions, unions had to be creative in developing the solidarity needed to respond to employers’ attempts to escape from prevailing regulatory arrangements, leading to the conclusion that institutionally derived “structure was not destiny” for the fortunes of workers (246). Across the empirical chapters, employers use any possible interpretations and levels of discretion available to overcome institutionalized barriers to their managerial prerogatives. This leads Doellgast to conclude that it takes strong trade unions to restore good jobs and working conditions, rather than “enlightened” employers who discover the virtues of labor-inclusive management, or inclusive skill formation systems aimed to promote market-based rewards for social concerns.

These two books have many different individual merits, but what they have in common is that they contribute to our understanding of labor agency and organizing in hard times. Comparativists have been wary before of “one size fits all” stories of unidirectional neoliberal change at the expense of working people. Even those who argue that liberalization is the only game in town have been quick to endorse that it is a “protean project” (Lucio Baccaro and Chris Howell, *Trajectories of Neoliberal Transformation: European Industrial Relations since the 1970s*, 2017) and that there are

“varieties of liberalization” (Kathleen Thelen, *Varieties of Liberalization: The New Politics of Social Solidarity*, 2014).

However, the workplace focus has the advantage of revealing the microlevel dynamics contributing to variation in workers’ fortunes, illuminating the contingencies and decisions taken (or not taken) from a shorter distance than macrostudies of industrial relations or public policy. Beyond the methodological merits of microlevel case studies, the workplace perspective recenters the sphere of work as more than an occupational category. “Class” may be back in much of comparative political economy, welfare state research, and comparative politics, but the conventional focus on opinion polls obscures the institutional contexts (Doellgast) and workplace discourses (Rothstein) that mediate how working people develop their problem perceptions, policy preferences, and modes of interest representation. In this way, *Recoding Power* and *Exit, Voice, and Solidarity* hold important implications beyond the disciplinary confines of employment and labor relations scholarship, especially for scholars of political science and political economy.

The big takeaway of these two books may be that the fortunes of trade unions have never been as doomed as they seemed under neoliberalism. The question for future research arising from the microlevel approaches taken by Doellgast and Rothstein is how the emerging post-neoliberal order reshapes the opportunities and constraints faced by labor agency. To be sure, liberalization has shifted the balance of class forces in more enduring ways, but there is reason to believe that unions are starting to find themselves in a different macro-political context. For example, recent EU directives have aimed to enhance minimum tax levels for multinational companies, strengthen minimum wage and collective bargaining regulations, provide fiscal grants and loans instead of imposing member state austerity (NGEU), and introduce greater environmental and social regulations for corporate supply chains. The economic thinking seems to have changed not only in Brussels but also in Washington, DC, as evidenced by the return of massive industrial policies and union-friendly policies. By showing how working people can organize and succeed even in hard times, *Recoding Power* and *Exit, Voice, and Solidarity* will stimulate debates about the fortunes of trade unions in the years to come.

Good Governance in Nigeria: Rethinking Accountability and Transparency in the Twenty-First Century. By

Portia Roelofs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 264p. \$99.99 cloth.

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— Carl LeVan , American University
levan@american.edu

When Nigeria’s military exited in 1999, the newly elected governor of Lagos, Bola Tinubu, inherited a state suffering

from crime, corruption, and economic stagnation. During eight years in office, he oversaw economic growth, social service expansion, increased revenues, and lower crime rates. Against the backdrop of an optimistic “Africa Rising” narrative (Dayo Olopade, *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules and Making Change in Modern Africa*, 2015), donors and scholars wondered whether the “Lagos model” could be replicated. The question took on a new saliency with Tinubu’s election as president in 2023. Portia Roelofs’s book offers an unconventional explanation for why the Lagos model proved difficult to replicate. It also questions how success is measured, formulating a carefully integrated critique of patronage, transparency, and other core concepts in governance research.

Drawing on field research in Lagos, Ekiti, and Oyo states, Roelofs argues that popular understandings of governance radically differ from practitioner parlance and donor designs. Tinubu’s model struggled beyond the southwest because his public–private partnerships, civil service cuts, and tax collection—which involved contracting to a company he had ties to—chafed against socially embedded power (145). In Lagos, the policies conveniently aligned with an international “good governance agenda”; beyond Lagos, the model’s notions of “epistemic superiority of competent rulers—that is, the idea that technocratic rulers know better” (109)—clashed with informal power. The World Bank prescribed a paternalism similar to Edmund Burke’s government by “trusteeship,” and Roelofs further blames western scholars who emphasized impersonal, technocratic knowledge.

The book opens by establishing the historical basis for competing conceptions of good governance within Yoruba culture. On the one hand, Nigeria has a conservative populist tradition “in which distribution and generosity are prioritized over progress” (59). On the other hand, the progressive tradition, spearheaded by the nationalist leader Obafemi Awolowo, emphasizes *olaju*, meaning civilization or development. Modernization requires leadership by educated elites because the people might not know what is best for them. This is a fair interpretation of “Awoism,” as described in great detail by Wale Adebawo’s 2014 book, *Yorùbá Elites and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria: Obáfè mi Awó lówò and Corporate Agency*. But it is also important to appreciate the popular appeal of Awolowo’s inclusive policies. For example, far from simply setting up elite enclaves of political power, free universal education was seen as essential for “indigenizing” the civil service after independence.

These “contested legacies” amount to an elegant ethnography of political competition during decolonization and the subsequent rise and fall and rise again of party politics. It can be hazardous to make broad claims for historical continuity in Nigeria, and Roelofs expertly makes her case. I hope that future work will integrate relevant northern movements such as those led by Aminu

Kanu and by the governor of Kano State and 2023 presidential candidate, Mohammed Rabi’u Kwankwaso. The book’s focus on the southwest is sensible but limits opportunities for self-reflection, especially where the practice of progressivism, populism, and “godfatherism” beyond Lagos could challenge her thesis.

Chapter 3 argues that the Lagos model converged with “the good governance agenda” advanced or, in her formulation, imposed from abroad. It further explores how “the biases of the good governance agenda and the neo-patrimonialism literature have been consolidated—not to mention made more respectable—through the subsequent embrace of economistic methodologies in political science” (53). Roelofs’s alternative centers on accountability as accessibility, which she begins articulating in chapter 4. In a “socially embedded” understanding of accountability, communication fosters relationships that constrain rulers through social sanctions. The book could more explicitly illustrate what such sanctions look like and when they succeed or fail. When assessing the theory’s originality, it also seems important to recall Joel Migdal’s influential *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (1988), which helped popularize the idea of a socially embedded understanding of the state.

Chapter 5 demythologizes and disaggregates transparency in development discourse and the popular Nigerian imagination. Although the Lagos model values “transparency in data” and technical expertise, Roelofs insists we must also consider the transparency of visible and tangible “things” along with transparency in “people”: knowing precisely *who* is governing signals important information about norms. Here she constructs a rich critique from focus groups and a thorough reading of the literature, although the analysis depends on a narrower definition of transparency than the one embraced by Nigerian civil society. As a result, she risks understating grassroots support for transparency in procurement, hiring, or human rights. Given that the country recovered billions of dollars stolen by Sani Abacha, the head of state between 1993 and 1998, who was assisted by the recently confirmed budget minister, civil society’s expectations for oversight of the recovered “loot” are high because norms of transparency and accountability for public resources run deep.

Chapter 6 updates Peter Ekeh’s characterization of Africa as torn between “civic” and “primordial” publics (“Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17, no. 1 [1975]). Nigerians expect good governance from politicians, whether they are in office or not. This chapter draws on recurring debates about civil society and whether its “autonomy” from the state is analytically useful or empirically accurate. The insights rely on a critique of principal-agent theory as limited by a “binary”

understanding of power and an emphasis on material incentives. This critique, however, understates the evolution of rational choice since 9/11 and the Perestroika Movement. For example, some rationalist-inspired analyses of Nigeria explore when and how elite power varies depending on the depth and breadth of societal linkages (Carl LeVan, *Dictators and Democracy in African Development: The Political Economy of Good Governance in Nigeria*, 2015). More generally, the criticism of economics' influence understates how eclectic political science has become, thanks in part to the channels opened up by the creation of this very journal. Yet none of this should discount Roelofs's many talents for concept development and building theory "in the field," enriched by humility.

External actors and structural adjustment programs constrained African actors and inspired a generation of popular protests against economic policies. But asserting historical continuities muddies the analytical picture—arguably and ironically—while neglecting Nigerian agency. Conditionality "tied the hands of African governments" (22), even though Roelofs notes that foreign aid plays a very small role in Nigeria. Conditionality also generally proved hard to enforce (Nicolas van de Walle, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979–1999*, 2001) and has arguably declined (Leonardo Arriola, Lise Rakner, and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Backsliding in Africa? Autocratization, Resilience, and Contention*, 2023). Moreover, Nigeria renegotiated and paid off virtually all its foreign debt in 2006, significantly reducing foreign leverage during the period of study. Soon thereafter debt returned, with states often borrowing directly; as some governors told me, some states circumvented the federal government by borrowing from private lenders more interested in profits than anything else. China's sizable loans similarly lack linkages to a "good governance agenda."

Roelofs says the agenda promoted multi-partyism and free elections but "limited the scope for democratic control over decision-making, especially on economic issues" (23). It problematically operationalizes success as "the provision of more and better public goods" (26). This sets up her argument that targeted benefits are not necessarily clientelistic, giving familiar political economy concepts new contours for debate.

One point of contention will be whether informal power increases the risks of exclusion. Joining an emerging critique of liberalism, she is also skeptical of its assumption of anonymity (186–88). This should, for example, include a discussion of the role liberalism can play in promoting fairness amidst sub/ethnic diversity. Another controversy will arise from the book's portrait of godfathers, popularly understood as "figures who use their informal power...to cultivate proteges and shape formal political outcomes" (89). The Lagos model assumes that godfathers lack transparency, but in Oyo "godfathers were instead agents

in the push towards a cleaner, more reliable mode of governance" (101). The rub is that godfathers also subvert popular will (92) and often mobilize violence (79), as Nigerians in Imo, Rivers, Kaduna, and many other states will tell you. Godfathers may comply with reciprocal obligations, generate jobs, or distribute free food but still construct subnational authoritarianism.

The practice of governance involves adaptation and innovation. Roelofs seeks to inspire fresh thinking about the nature of power that can suffocate local mechanisms of progress. Political development debates will be enriched by her insights about accountability and novel evidence from the field. For his part, President Tinubu has prudently looked to the economic choices of his (recent) predecessors to identify key drivers of Nigeria's developmental disappointments, even when it may be useful to look elsewhere.

Order out of Chaos: Islam, Information, and the Rise and Fall of Social Orders in Iraq. By David Siddhartha Patel.

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— Michael Hechter , Arizona State University
michael.hechter@asu.edu

Order out of Chaos analyzes the consequences of state collapse in Basra, Iraq's main southern city, following the collapse of the Ba'athist regime in April 2003. In its wake, the city's residents, long acclimated to Saddam's highly regimented regime, immediately faced an unaccustomed reality of full-fledged social disorder. The occupation authorities did not (or could not) step in, producing massive looting and crime. Trash was uncollected, and people dumped it wherever it was most convenient. Streets and canals were overcome with raw sewage. Polluted water pooled throughout the city, and the electrical grid and overall infrastructure cratered. Because there were no municipal workers—even bribable ones—to address these issues, all these problems persisted. This is the situation that David Patel found himself in when he arrived in Basra the following September to conduct an ethnographic study.

The problem of social order is one of the enduring issues in social science, dating at least to the publication of Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* in 1651. Hobbes attempted to explain how atomistic individuals in a hypothetical state of nature desiring to avoid injury and death could create a social order that would guarantee their security. That social order, according to Hobbes, consisted in the establishment of an authoritative state that could provide security and other public goods.

Whereas the dismantling of the Ba'athist state clearly led to social disorder, Basra in 2003 hardly resembled a Hobbesian state of nature; that is, an institution-free zone. Even if