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again, are to be praised for highlighting intrinsic links between climate politics and more general politics as well as the fundamental significance of a changing distribution of freshwater, even more so than rising temperatures or rising sea levels. Authors also consistently point out the social inequalities that climate change exacerbates, at virtually every level of development, and effectively argue that the crucial fault line in the developing world will likely be between urban and rural populations.

The overall organisation of the work could still be improved, however, when it comes to comparing the different regions and states. In particular, while Moran outlines six fundamental questions regarding climate change and national security, and the series authors adopt this structure dutifully, the bulk of the text can be unwieldy if read cover to cover. More explanatory power could be gleaned if cases were grouped into categories such as the ‘threat multipliers’ many of the authors identify. This is not to recommend that the effective presentation of chapters as country case studies should be scrapped. Rather, another layer of organisation could be superimposed on these chapters so that they are grouped into sections within the book.

These sections could include states that face significant agricultural loss tied to changing precipitation patterns as well as another group of states where storm surges and rising sea levels are the predominant risk. Yet another category could be states where environmental refugees (both internal and external) are the greater threat. And finally, a handful of states could be grouped together as those most likely to face outright failure or at least significant challenges to their weak institutions. Some overlap would exist between each of these groups of course, but that would be for each author to touch upon in their respective chapters and another topic for Moran to address in his conclusion, adding still more theoretical punch and cohesiveness to the collective work.

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This is a very ambitious and bold book both in its scope and argument. While much has been written about the resurgence of religious politics in Egypt, India and the US, scholars have paid less attention to the role of the state in shaping or promoting new visions of religion and society. With the intention of filling this gap, Hibbard argues that not only is religion shaping politics as many people have argued, but also, to a great extent, politics has shaped religion and contributed greatly to the proliferation of religious ideologies. His basic argument is that mainstream political actors in India, Egypt and the US, have ‘brought an exclusive vision of religious nationalism back into the ideological mainstream’ to expand and legitimise their social basis at the same time as these states, according to Hibbard, are considered ‘as increasingly secular’ in the 1960s (p. 246). Hibbard argues that this trend has sparked a new era of right-wing religious populism in all three nations.
In the initial theoretical chapter, he argues that religion is central to the formation of nationalist and communitarian ideologies, and ‘religious fundamentalisms do not reflect a conflict between tradition and modernity … rather … [they] embody a selective interpretation of religious tradition and were explicitly developed for a modern political context’ (p. 20). In the following chapters the book follows up the debate with a discussion on the rise and fall of secularism in Egypt, India and the US with a special reference to the particular historical context in each state and how the orientation of state actors changed towards ‘an exclusive version of religion and politics’ (p. 7). According to Hibbard’s analysis, Egypt, India and the US were quintessential models of secular modernity in the 1950s and 1960s; however, in the 1980s and 1990s, he says, Islamists challenged state authority in Egypt, Hindu nationalism gained a huge presence in India and later on culminated with the BJP coming to power, and the Christian right rose to dominance in the US through the Republican Party.

Hibbard then asks: why is that so? What are the reasons behind this trend?

Hibbard argues that the rise of religion in politics in these countries is not a direct result of ‘a return to some traditional past’, rather, it is ‘a byproduct of the modern nature of mass politics’ (p. 48) utilised mostly by state actors. In Egypt, Hosni Mubarek, in India, Rajiv Gandhi, in the US, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, Hibbard argues, are accountable for paving the way for populist and ‘illiberal interpretations of religious tradition’ in order to ‘promote conservative or communal beliefs as a basis of national authority’ (p. 251). He further contends that this process concluded with a diversion from earlier secular state policies and ended up in legitimising or normalising religion in politics. This is very much debatable because the renewal of religious elements has many more dimensions than only a political one as Hibbard also recognises. However, locating the political elite at the very centre is not only in a sense ‘detective-oriented’ – as if trying to find who is guilty – but also misleading. There are at least three reasons for this.

Firstly, despite a very detailed analysis, the author, wittingly or unwittingly, abstains from facing the question of whether or not a resurgence of religion would have taken place if secular elites would have taken an opposite position by remaining staunchly secular. Too much emphasis on the role of the state elite raises more questions than answers. What if the state elite had utilised and preferred to get closer to religious groups not because they wanted this deliberately; rather they were forced to do so in order to secure their social and political legitimacy? What if the state elite is not an active actor of this process, as Hibbard says, but rather a passive consumer or even free-rider? Putting too much agency on state elites both undermines the changing social dynamics in those states in terms of religious renewal and, if I may say, covertly denies the agency to religious groups and discourse. Unfortunately, Hibbard does not touch upon these issues, let alone raise them in the book.

Secondly, the prominence of religion in these countries, especially in India and Egypt, represents a direct failure of secularism and secularisation rather than a conscious choice by the political elite. Secularisation politics of the 1950s and 1960s could not find solutions to existing social, economic and political problems. Hibbard’s focus would have been much better contextualised if he argued that due to the failure of state machinery and elites, religious movements gained momentum and legitimacy in these states mostly by their socio-economic projects. He is right in blaming secular elites for the failure of modernisation and secularisation, but he does so from a very different perspective and
focuses too much on state machinery by downgrading the changing social dynamics since the 1950s.

Lastly, the book has also an implicit assumption that if states had followed the earlier choices with regard to religion and state relations (i.e. secularism), today we would not see the rise of ‘illiberal’ religion in the political arena. This is also problematic because the rise of religion especially in non-Western states has more social origins than political ones, as mentioned above. As Thomas argues, it can be seen as part of ‘widespread disillusionment with a “modernity” which reduces the world to what can be perceived and controlled through reason, science, technology, and bureaucratic rationality, and leaves out considerations of the religious, the spiritual or the sacred’.¹

Despite these shortcomings, the book underlines one very important issue that will be debated and will shape the future of these states: the role of religion in politics. Hibbard contributes to this debate with a comparative analysis by taking three different religions from three different continents. Although his conclusions may be controversial, his in-depth analysis, short summary of developments and clear-cut argument enrich the current debates.

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