Mohammad Ali Kadivar. *Popular Politics and the Path to Durable Democracy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2022. $120.00 (hardcover), $35.00 (paper).

Val Moghadam
Northeastern University

In a slim but comprehensive book, Mohammad Ali Kadivar provides quantitative and qualitative evidence that the duration of popular mobilizations matters for democratic consolidation. *Popular Politics and the Path to Durable Democracy*'s analyzes 112 cases from 1959-1960 to 2010 (ch. 2), then dives into the cases of South Africa and Poland, with a comparative look at Pakistan's 1988 military-led transition (ch. 3), followed by two Arab Spring cases: Egypt 2011-2013 (ch. 4) and Tunisia 2011-14 (ch. 5). Egypt and Tunisia are outside Kadivar's dataset for 1960-2010, but they provide an important example of failed transition (Egypt) and an anomalous case that initially succeeded (Tunisia).

In the quantitative study, Kadivar's primary independent variable is the duration of popular campaigns contributing to a democratic transition. His analysis concludes that Poland's lasted six years and South Africa's thirteen: the longest in the dataset.

Using his case studies, Kadivar examines five major components: pro-democracy mobilization and its organizational infrastructure, democratic transition, mobilization's effect on both leadership change and civil society, and the role of these factors in the survival or failure of the new democracy. Kadivar does not examine regional effects, though he stresses their importance: young democracies in more democratic regions are more likely to survive. This was the advantage of Latin America, Poland, and other European countries; in contrast, Tunisia's transition took place in a dangerous neighborhood, explaining the difficulties it encountered.

Refuting Samuel Huntington's "elitist" position that popular struggles hinder or distort democracy, Kadivar argues that prodemocracy mobilizations may increase the durability of emerging democratic regimes. Unarmed campaigns that mobilize over many years generate organizational structures that provide leaders for the new regime. They create stronger democratic institutions, forge links between government and society, and strengthen checks on post-transition government power. Here, Kadivar echoes Zeynab Tufekci's book *Twitter and Teargas*, and argues against the "horizontalism" celebrated by many scholars. He is critical of the horizontalism preferred by young Egyptian revolutionaries; he notes that after Mubarak's downfall, there was no clear agenda for change. In the absence of a strong organization to defend the democratic alternative, the Muslim Brotherhood—the biggest national organization—won the 2011 and 2012 elections. This Islamist organization, and Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohammad Morsi, a member, became unpopular, generating a wave of protests with calls for military intervention. The 2013 military coup portended Egypt's democratic backsliding.

Kadivar also takes issue with Piven and Cloward's assertion in *Poor People's Movements* that formal organizations demobilize movements and can be coopted. It is precisely those formal organizations, strategies, leadership, and alliances that are needed for successful outcomes. Moreover, some *ancièn regime* corporatist bodies, such as trade unions, can play a pivotal role in mobilizations and democratic transitions: Tunisia is a case in point, with its well-known trade union, the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT).

All this is quite convincing. However, looking more closely at various popular mobilizations, one observes diverse pathways to democratic consolidation, with both violence and nonviolence. South Africa, for example, saw armed struggle as well as nonviolent contention, and an elite compromise with a pacted transition. As of 2023, South Africa is still a democracy, by Kadivar's definition. However, it suffers from extensive poverty, income inequality, and elite corruption, along with high rates of criminal violence and violence against women. Thus, in addition to the duration of mobilization and formal democracy, one may ask: can there be a durable democracy without socioeconomic justice? Should popular mobilization and democratic transition not be accompanied by popular welfare? Should we not measure human development or human security, including women's physical security?

Speaking of women, Kadivar notes that civil society can be comprised of progressive groups such as trade unions and human rights organizations, but he but does not mention women's/feminist and mobilizations. Nor does he consider whether women's political presence and social empowerment might influence the unarmed nature of a pro-democracy campaign or the quality of its transition and democratic durability. Kadivar mentions the power of large military institutions in countries like Pakistan and Egypt, but he does not consider the implications for pro-democracy mobilizations and democratic outcomes of such militarized masculinities.

Kadivar considers Tunisia an "anomalous" case because of the short duration of its pro-

democracy mobilization. He seems critical of the political parties that emerged at the start of the transition. Others, too, have criticized the large number of new parties that came and went, but could the crowded field not suggest enthusiasm for the emergent democratic polity?

Like many scholars of the Arab Spring, Kadivar is impressed by the UGTT and its decades of organizational experience, large membership, and capacity to negotiate and mobilize. I share that admiration. But what of other pre-existing civil society groups, including feminist organizations and marginalized parties such as Tajdid (the former communist party) and the Progressive Democratic Party (later known as Jomhouri and co-led by a woman, Maya Jribi)? Tunisia benefited from a large population of educated and skilled activists, scholars, and professionals who went on to staff the many new commissions that paved the way for elections to the Constituent Assembly. Kadivar points out that, unlike Egypt, power in Tunisia was divided more evenly between Islamists and non-Islamists, and there were no calls for military intervention. The main reasons lie in Tunisia's pre-existing civil society. In contrast, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood had worked for decades to organize in all manner of institutions, from NGOs and the lawyers' association to neighborhood services. This imparted an advantage over secular, feminist, and progressive groups.

Of course, Tunisia experienced its own democratic backsliding in summer 2021—which in my judgement had more to do with its economic difficulties and lack of sufficient international support than squabbling between political parties. It is conceivable that under alternative conditions, Tunisia could experience redemocratization.

The details about protests, elections, and transitions in Egypt and Tunisia will be instructive to non-specialists if familiar to Middle East and North Africa experts. For specialists, the book's best part is likely the extensive survey of Arabic-language press accounts in Egypt and Tunisia. I was also taken by the way the book begins on a personal note about Kadivar's upbringing in Iran and the experiences of his grandfather and father during two critical episodes in Iranian history. I was expecting to see the book end on a similar note, or at least a tentative application of the book's thesis to activism since Iran's 2009 Green Protests, including the women-led protests that began in September 2022. Kadivar's assessment of the nature of those protests, and their prospects, would have linked back to the introductory re-marks while applying his thesis to another case. Perhaps such an analysis might be in the works.

Kadivar has produced a fine study and an important contribution to the literatures on social movements, democratic transitions, and the Arab Spring. It will be excellent for classes in methodology as well as in an array of undergraduate courses and graduate seminars in political science and sociology.

Evan Lieberman. *Until We Have Won Our Liberty: South Africa after Apartheid*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2022. $32.00 (hardcover).

Marcel Paret
University of Utah and University of Johannesburg

In the run-up to South Africa's 2014 national election, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) campaigned on the idea that it had a "good story to tell." It was a response to growing concerns about government corruption, persistent poverty and inequality, and the recent killing of thirty-four striking mineworkers by police at Marikana—a scene reminiscent of past apartheid repression—among other ills. Against mounting criticism, the ANC's slogan sought to underscore the progress made since the dramatic transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994. The ruling party's election manifesto noted, "We are proud that South Africa is a much better place than it was before 1994."

Evan Lieberman's *Until We Have Won Our Liberty: South Africa after Apartheid* weighs in on this debate, seeking to "assess the strength and value of South Africa's still young democracy" (p. 7). Like the ANC in 2014, Lieberman has a good story to tell. He argues South African democracy has been "extremely successful," leading to what he calls "dignified development" (viii). The latter entails improved access to housing, water, and electricity, the countering of poverty through government grants, enhancements in health care and education, and—especially significant for Lieberman—improved race relations and commitments to human rights. As Lieberman states in his concluding paragraph, "Democracy in South Africa is working" (p. 260).

This is a bold argument. Critical voices continue to loom large, as they did in 2014, both inside and outside the academy. One of Lieberman's key goals is to counter unwarranted pessimism and negative assessments, which he suggests are misleading. He aims to provide balance by recognizing the country's achievements under democracy and ANC rule. He presents his analysis as a "reality check," (p. 258) showing how "democracy saved South Africa" (p. 260) from a more disastrous authoritarian path (pp. 258-260).