The relationship between religion and politics in the Arab world has been one of the recurrent themes in the study of Arab societies. A significant amount of political science scholarship has focused specifically on how religious precepts, symbols and language have been employed to mobilize citizens and attain political objectives. Thus the scholarship has accumulated an incredible amount of knowledge and information on how and why Islamist movements of all hues have operated. Much less though has been known about how Arab states have regulated religion, namely its practices and practitioners. Following from that, much of the politics of the Arab world is framed through the competition between secular states against religious actors or, more broadly, between secular sectors of society and religious ones. This book is a welcome contribution to the study of the relationship between religion and politics because it implicitly challenges some of the facile frameworks that are often used to understand it.

The most significant contribution the book makes is to “bring the state back in”. Rather than assuming that religion is simply an instrument to challenge authoritarian incumbents or one under which ruling elites hide behind to reaffirm their power, the author details the policies that the state over time implemented to regulate religion and religious education, paying particular attention to the factors explaining the implementation of such policies. In doing so the author provides important insights on how states deal with religion politically and how crucial it is to include this aspect in explanations regarding the relationship between Islamist movements and state authorities.

A second important contribution is the analysis of how Arab states implement different policies when it comes to regulating religion and religious education. While there is a consensus in the literature on the different legitimacy resources that Arab states have drawn on since independence when it comes to the role of religion, Feuer’s work traces
the evolution of religious policies to highlight important differences in implementation. The author is able to do so convincingly because of the strength of her theoretical framework. Rather than falling into the trap of monicausalitly, the author presents a rich theoretical structure where different elements are at play and whose interactions are key to understand how states as similar as Tunisia and Morocco implemented significantly different religious policies. More specifically, the author argues that to understand variance one needs to examine the government’s ideology, the nature of the political opposition, and the bureaucratic strength of state institutions. Too often scholars have focused only on the ideology of the early post-colonial state to explain its stance on religion and its use in the public and political spheres. Thus, Tunisia was and is a secular state, while Morocco is a conservative one where religion plays a legitimizing role personified in the role of the King as Commander of the Faithful. While this is true, it is not the “only” story that can be told about how these two states went about regulating Islam, as the author puts it. The nature of the political opposition, whether leftist or Islamist for instance, and the capabilities of the state bureaucracy to carry out policies are equally important in understanding both how the two states went about regulating religion differently and how they also experienced very different phases in their individual quest to ensure control of religion and religious education.

A final contribution lies in the extensive and detailed empirical data that support the book’s theoretical framework. There is a wealth of both archival material and interviews that shed light on the intricacies of policy-implementation and the thinking behind it. This empirical work substantiates the theoretical claims, ensuring the coherence of the arguments made.

Given the strength of the theoretical framework and the depth of the empirical data, one might have expected a stronger conclusion. While the author spends a few pages on the potential generalizations of her study, more could have been done to extend the applicability of the findings to other cases. One could have for instance looked at religious policy in Jordan, which is often compared to Morocco when it comes to governance and institutions, and Syria under the Assads, a regime often compared to Ben Ali’s Tunisia. This weakness should not take away from the validity and interest of the book, but attempts to go into more detail about other cases would have provided readers with greater added value.
This book should encourage other scholars to examine how religion is dealt with not only in the Islamist camp because the way in which states regulate Islam and religious education can contribute to understand broader debates in Arab politics.

**God and the Secular Legal System.** Edited By Rafael Domingo. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016. xiv + 180 pp. $27.99 paper

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Justin Buckley Dyer
University of Missouri, Colombia

“The core of the argument,” Rafael Domingo tells his readers in the introduction to *God and the Secular Legal System*, “is the idea that secular legal systems should treat God, religion, and conscience with respect” (p. 1). According to Domingo, a secular legal system is one in which religious sources and legal sources are distinct and independent, and the purpose of a secular legal system is “to enable citizens to live and develop together within a single framework, despite disagreement over fundamentals.” Ultimately, the “assumption of a common human reason provides the epistemic justification for a legal system that does not depend on a religious legitimation” (p. 2). In 180 tightly-packed pages, Domingo explores how the secular legal system, epistemically grounded in a common human reason and therefore in no apparent need of religious legitimation, should relate to the concepts of God, religion, and conscience.

Domingo, the Spruill Family Research Professor at Emory University School of Law, takes a distinctive approach to these well-trodden topics. Rejecting alike what he calls the “religious approach” and the “secular approach” to jurisprudence, Domingo opts for what he dubs a “theistic secular” approach. He would put the American founders in the religious camp, seeing as how they frequently grounded the secular law in the transcendent laws of nature and of nature’s God, while putting modern liberals