

Laudation

From the 2022 Jury for the Stein Rokkan Prize for Comparative Social Science Research

The Jury has this year chosen to honour **Religious Parties and the Politics of Civil Liberties**, written by **Vineeta Yadav**, and published in 2021 by Oxford University Press.

In this field-defining book, Vineeta sets herself the task of finding out whether the rise of religious parties results in the decline of civil liberties. This is a question that worries scholars and observers around the world who are witnessing the rise of religious parties. To answer her question, Vineeta puts forward a complex yet elegant argument about how the interaction between religious parties, religious interest groups and the political and economic conditions that shape the relationship between the two sets of actors impact upon the civil liberty policies and actions of governing religious parties.

Vineeta's book is broad in scope, original and innovative. It is theoretically ambitious, methodologically rigorous, and empirically rich. The book draws on large amounts of different types of data, including elite and in-depth surveys. It also draws on an original dataset on religious parties in governments, the legislative representation of these parties and original measurement of the socio-economic institutionalisation of religious organisation to answer crucial questions on the fate of civil liberties under religious governments in Muslim-majority countries. The book thus constitutes a 'very substantial and original contribution in comparative social science research', exemplifying the virtues that the Stein Rokkan Prize is intended to honour.

Religious Parties and the Politics of Civil Liberties advances several fields of social science research: the study of political parties, in particular religious parties, which tends to focus on advanced democracies and Latin America; the study of social movements, by adding religious organisation as a new special-interest group to the focus of the field; the study of interest groups, by expanding existing arguments on goals and strategies of interest groups to the case of religious organisations. The book also answers long-held calls to systematically link the studies of special-interest groups and party politics.

Vineeta's book is relevant for those interested in human rights and the conditions that lead to their demise. It is also relevant for democracy scholars, because it showcases clearly the tensions between a liberal democracy that implements the preferences of its people while striving to uphold a liberal conception of civil liberties.

For all these reasons, the Stein Rokkan Prize Jury unanimously recognises *Religious Parties and the Politics of Civil Liberties* as the 2022 prize winner.

Anne Rasmussen (Chair)

On behalf of the Stein Rokkan Prize Jury
European Consortium for Political Research

