

in turn, has resolved the long-puzzling weak relationship between mass conservatism and state partisanship. In recent years, mass ideology and state partisanship have become highly correlated, and partisan control of state institutions has significant effects on policy outcomes. Indeed the effect of partisan control on economic policy conservatism since 1993 is double that observed in earlier eras. Similarly, Republican control now produces increases in cultural policy conservatism, whereas it had no effect in earlier eras. Critically, Caughey and Warshaw interpret this trend as consistent with responsiveness: “By making primary electorates and activist networks more extreme, partisan divergence in the mass public has in turn reinforced and probably exacerbated partisan divergence among political elites” (75).

Second, Caughey and Warshaw find evidence that voters continue to exercise a moderating influence on policy, despite bottom-up–fueled polarization. Even with the growing importance of national tides in shaping state elections, state-specific factors continue to have considerable influence on electoral outcomes; normatively, this influence is incredibly important because it suggests elections still afford an important accountability mechanism through which voters reward or punish incumbents for state-level outcomes. Even in our intensely polarized contemporary era, voters incentivize moderation among their political representatives. Across a range of measures, the data show evidence of a modest but meaningful electoral penalty for ideological extremism. Regression discontinuity analyses also yield important evidence for what Caughey and Warshaw call electoral balancing. Namely, narrowly winning a toss-up gubernatorial race or control of a state house costs the party at the polls in the next election. Collectively, these electoral forces incentivize officeholders to moderate and be responsive to citizen preferences.

Perhaps the book’s greatest limitation is that the individual-level processes that underlie some of the most important aggregate-level dynamics uncovered in the book remain unclear. For example, electoral balancing is a key mechanism incentivizing political responsiveness. The balancing logic suggests that the electoral penalty incurred by winning a governorship or state house control should be greater if a party uses that power to pursue more extreme policies. However, the size of this electoral penalty does not vary with the magnitude of policy changes pursued while in office. Caughey and Warshaw argue that state-level polarization is, at least in part, driven from the bottom up, with polarized primary voters and activists exacerbating elite-level divides. But what has led voters to polarize, if not in response to elite cues? This remains unclear. Similarly, the aggregate-level analyses presented in chapter 3 suggest that state publics have brought their partisan affiliations in line with their ideological orientations. This accords with impressionistic evidence: for example, most white southerners did not first become Republicans and then more

conservative, but rather conservative white southerners gradually became more likely to identify with the Republican Party. However, this and other aggregate-level patterns are sometimes in tension with microlevel studies of individual behavior. Ultimately, this is not so much a weakness per se as it is a clear signpost for the need for more research to better understand these disjunctions.

Dynamic Democracy is one of the most important books written on state politics in years, and it offers a stark challenge to narratives lamenting democratic decline in contemporary American politics. The book’s argument, data, and findings are sure to serve as a catalyst for new research in the field, and it will be of interest to students and scholars from across political science and related disciplines.

Political Black Girl Magic: The Elections and Governance of Black Female Mayors. Edited by

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Political Black Girl Magic: The Elections and Governance of Black Female Mayors, edited by Sharon D. Wright Austin, presents a thoughtful and careful exploration into the experiences of Black female mayors in some of the America’s key cities. The author notes that previous research on Black female mayors often focused on their campaigns while neglecting their governance. Moreover, this work is the first of its kind to present a carefully crafted analysis of both the campaigns and mayorships of Black female mayors from small, medium-sized, and major metropolitan cities. By presenting an examination of Black female mayors in varied types of cities over a span of historical contexts, this book provides a comprehensive analysis of the complexities surrounding Black female mayorships. Over the course of 14 chapters written by a combination of 21 authors, the book investigates the run-up to the elections of some of America’s most prominent Black female mayors, examines public attitudes toward their campaigns, and offers an analysis of the factors that affected their success once in office.

One of the book’s key takeaways is that the experiences faced by Black female mayors in the United States are nuanced and complex. Although in her famous 1989 essay, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics,” Kimberlé Crenshaw indicates that Black women face a certain set of circumstances because of their dual race–gender identity, the book finds that not every Black female mayor has had the same set of experiences. For instance, take Deirdre Waterman, mayor of Pontiac, and Karen

Weaver, mayor of Flint, both cities in Michigan. Although both mayors governed cities that were riddled with troubles surrounding economic development, crime, and poverty, Waterman and Weaver had a dissimilar set of experiences in office: Waterman was able to secure reelection and ultimately serve two terms in office, whereas Weaver had a less positive experience in Flint. Weaver's term took place during the height of the Flint water crisis, which she faced much criticism for, and she was ultimately not reelected. The authors also examine the mayorships of Unita Blackwell and Sheriel Perkins in the Mississippi Delta: both served as "historic firsts" (118), as they were the first women of any race to be elected in their respective towns. However, these women served in office nearly thirty years apart and therefore under a very different set of circumstances. Although Perkins was able to build a winning coalition of young voters, older voters, and Black female voters during the 2006 election, her vote count fell about 206 points short of her opponent, Harry Smith. A circuit court judge later found those votes to be illegal, and Perkins was ultimately voted into office in a special election, serving a two-and-a-half-year term.

One thread that unites many of these Black women is their being subjected to substantial criticisms throughout their mayorships. For example, Karen Weaver not only faced criticism for her response to the Flint water crisis but also for irrelevant factors such as her shoes, hairstyle choices, and earrings. Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta also experienced her fair share of criticism, both during and after her campaign. Comments about her temperament were unsurprisingly called into question, given that they played all too well into the notorious "angry Black woman" trope. Sharon Pratt of Washington, DC, faced significant challenges during her mayorship as well. As the first Black female mayor to govern the nation's capital, Pratt "experienced challenges to her leadership defined by sexism, racial discrimination, and persisting patriarchal attitudes" beginning in 1991 (234).

These types of obstacles and criticisms faced by the Black female mayors examined are clearly indicative of a particular form of discrimination rooted simultaneously in *both* racism and sexism. The book's findings align well with those of other works suggesting that Black women often encounter a distinct set of challenges in the political realm. For example, Nadia E. Brown and Danielle Casarez Lemi explored in their 2021 book, *Sister Style: The Politics of Appearance for Black Women Political Elites*, how characteristics such as hair and skin color influence voters' attitudes toward Black women candidates and elected officials.

Another theme that is interwoven throughout the book is the deep importance of Black women's political representation because they have the power to uniquely represent the interests of the voters they serve. It becomes clear how important it is that the voters in the cities analyzed—Black voters, in particular—have political leaders that not only match their policy interests but who can also relate to their experiences in ways that non-Black or non-female mayors may not. These Black women mayors also have the ability to inspire the next generation of Black female leaders—an advantage that should not be taken lightly.

Overall, *Political Black Girl Magic* is an important work that can increase our understanding of both the obstacles and successes encountered by Black female mayors in U.S. cities. At the same time, this book will likely have a significant influence on the broader race, gender, and politics literatures with its novel in-depth, rigorous analysis of the experiences of Black female mayors. It is vital that scholars continue to make a conscious effort to critically examine the challenges faced by and the successes of Black women in the political space. Moreover, this book showcases the substantial efforts of Black female mayors to improve U.S. cities and the ways in which they, through both trials and tribulations, exude "Political Black Girl Magic" at its core.

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Autocracy Rising: How Venezuela Transitioned to Authoritarianism. By Javier Corrales. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. 2022. 256p. \$85.00 cloth, \$32.00 paper.
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On December 6, 2015, opposition parties in Venezuela achieved an unprecedented victory in the parliamentary elections and won a two-thirds majority. Instead of initiating a process of democratic transition, however, this

victory marked the beginning of a new era when President Nicolás Maduro decided to increase the degree of repression and quickly turned Venezuela into a full-scale authoritarian regime. In his new book, Javier Corrales considers the rise of the opposition to be the key factor that pushed Maduro to fully autocratize. He argues that when the balance of power in the party system started to favor the opposition, Maduro either had to liberalize or block the prospects of democratic change. Maduro chose the latter and succeeded because he inherited autocratic tools from Chávez and deployed them innovatively.

Autocracy Rising starts with an overview of the theoretical framework and the central theme of the transition from