

Women of color also tend to have different reasons for running for office. For example, a key factor cited by many Asian American women and Latinas in their decision to run was having “ties and obligations to a wider community of women, co-ethnic women, immigrants, and non-white groups” (p. 170). Co-ethnic men were much less likely to cite these ties and obligations as a primary reason for their candidacy.

Phillips collects and analyzes an impressive array of original data, including racial and gender identities of state legislative candidates and district information from nearly two decades of elections, a survey of 547 sitting state legislators, and 54 in-depth interviews of candidates and other political elites to test the intersectional model of electoral opportunity. These data allow for robust tests of the individual, structural, and contextual factors that facilitate and constrain women and people of color from running for office. However, a potential drawback of this data could be selection bias. By focusing almost exclusively on candidates, the analysis may be biased toward people who are successfully able to pursue electoral opportunities. What about people who are interested in running for office but who have not made it to the point of being a candidate? By excluding this set of people, the analysis may miss an important set of factors that constrain political opportunities. To more fully identify the factors that constrain candidate emergence, these voices should be included.

The theory and analyses in this book represent a major contribution to our understanding of the factors that influence pathways to candidacy for women and people of color, as well as the prospects for descriptive representation. In the conclusion, Phillips turns to the essential discussion of how to break down barriers to candidacy for people from underrepresented communities. Given the central role of the racial composition of districts, one potential avenue to remove barriers to candidacy is through the creation of more majority-minority districts that would provide a greater number of realistic opportunities for candidacy and electoral success. However, Republicans control the redistricting process in most states and have electoral incentives to restrict the number of majority-minority districts. That, combined with the lack of redistricting reform legislation like the *Freedom to Vote Act*, makes shifting the racial composition of districts in a way that is favorable to women and people of color an infeasible solution, at least in the short run.

Phillips then proposes two more viable avenues for facilitating pathways to candidacy. First, parties and organizations should shift the risk assessment they use in determining the resources and support they provide for candidate development. There should be a greater focus on supporting women and people of color in Democratic-leaning white-majority districts in which there is a more viable pathway to victory for candidates. This could be an

especially helpful solution because Democratic voters are becoming increasingly supportive of candidates of color and women candidates.

Second, there needs to be a focus on marginalized subgroups by parties and organizations engaged in candidate development. By providing support and resources, a pipeline of political leadership among women of color can be created that helps dismantle structural barriers to candidacy. As Phillips acknowledges, however, male-dominant networks and institutions will remain a barrier. Moreover, there is little discussion in the book of the ways that antagonism from the American Right and white-dominant power structures on the Left complicates these potential reforms. Given the importance of finding viable solutions to candidate emergence, and the unique insights Phillips can bring to that process, a deeper discussion on this topic would have been welcome. I hope that future work on the subject by Phillips and others can be vital in improving prospects for descriptive representation.

Past scholarship makes clear that descriptive representation tends to lead to greater substantive representation of the interests and concerns of members of marginalized communities. In a political environment characterized by frequent attacks on minority groups from the Right and inaction from the Left, descriptive representation is more important than ever. The intersectional model of electoral opportunity and the robust empirical analysis of Phillips’s model clarify the pathway to candidate emergence for members of underrepresented communities, while the conclusion provides a helpful starting point for formulating solutions to the many structural and informal barriers to descriptive representation identified in this important book.

Gerrymandering: The Politics of Redistricting in the United States. By Stephen K. Medvic. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021. 220p. \$64.95 cloth, \$22.99 paper.

Gerrymandering the States: Partisanship, Race, and the Transformation of American Federalism. By

Alex Keena, Michael Latner, Anthony J. McGann, and Charles Anthony Smith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 244p. \$84.99 cloth, \$29.99 paper.

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The democratic malady known as gerrymandering was foisted on the American people even before there was a United States. During the recent decade, in the wake of the Republican Party’s REDMAP project’s self-congratulatory claim to have pulled off what one commentator called the “Great Gerrymander of 2012,” and the admission by Democrats of gerrymandering in Maryland, the

manipulation of districts lines for partisan advantage has captured more attention than at any time in its long history. The US Supreme Court heard three cases over the course of the decade, ultimately deciding that partisan gerrymandering is beyond the reach of the federal judiciary for want of a manageable standard. State supreme courts have stepped into the breach in a few situations to void their state's districts as gerrymanders. The people in several states have used referenda to turn line drawing over to various forms of commissions. And the 117th Congress had bills pending that called for state commissions to draw post-2020 congressional district lines and, in doing so, to meet particular standards designed to avoid gerrymanders—*pending* being the operative word.

The clear manipulations of district boundaries in various states introduced at the beginning of the past decade have drawn a good deal of attention from political scientists and, not to be parochial, from geographers, legal academics, statisticians, computer and data scientists, mathematicians, and even a neuroscientist. Likely in anticipation of the 2021–22 round of redistricting and gerrymandering, Stephen Medvic's *Gerrymandering* offers readers a wide-lens overview of gerrymandering from a political scientist steeped in the literature. Alex Keena, Michael Latner, Anthony McGann, and Charles Smith's *Gerrymandering the States* offer their second installment this decade, earlier on congressional districts and here on a thoroughgoing analysis of 2012–22 state legislative districts. As one can surmise, the two books have different purposes in mind, take different approaches, reach different conclusions but, in the end, offer similar reform recommendations. In combination they offer a complementarity: a wide-angle perspective on gerrymandering and an intensely applied focus of gerrymandering actions over the past decade.

Medvic's *Gerrymandering* presents readers with a self-described introduction to redistricting and gerrymandering directed at answering two questions: How does gerrymandering work, and does it offend democratic principles? He opens with a thoughtful, evenhanded back and forth between arguments over whether gerrymandering is antithetical to the common good or just plain old politics that applies as much to choosing rules as to choosing policies. It is clear, though not announced, from this early discussion that, for Medvic, gerrymandering is a fascinating process of partisan politics more so than one of pernicious politics. His steadfast evenhandedness remains the most consistent theme as he opens his inquiries with a well-written brief history of districting in the United States, reaching back to choosing districts in the seventeenth century and working his way through to the reapportionment revolution in the 1960s. From there, Medvic offers as comprehensive an overview of the Supreme Court's decisions on gerrymandering, racial and partisan, as anyone might be able to construct in a

25-page chapter. Because, as he puts it, the Court slammed the door on federal constitutionally based remedies for partisan gerrymandering in *Rucho v. Common Cause*, he turns to describe how partisan gerrymanders are constructed, what consequences they have, and what nonjudicial reform remedies remain available.

After working through the basics of the “who and how” of redistricting processes, Medvic concludes with a forecast for the following chapter by arguing that gerrymanders can be effective, but that the facts on the ground place their own limits on them. From this it follows, in Medvic's telling, that claims about gerrymandering's consequences are often hyperbolic. Are they really exaggerated, or is this where the evenhanded approach without much hint of a critical, analytic, evaluative commentary turns against itself? His impressive review of a large swath of literature on gerrymandering's consequences reports conclusions both for *and* against reduced/increased competitiveness, enhanced/transient/no partisan advantages, help/hindrance to incumbents, and increased/reduced voter turnout. No doubt these are accurate reports, but not all conclusions have equal standing. There are reasons for the “for and against,” but what are those reasons is not explored by Medvic. So, instead, he asks what could be done to curb gerrymandering, even if the only reform purpose is to generate more public confidence in elections. That is Medvic's last question (followed by a useful pointing to further reading). He answers that independent commissions are one possibility; in deeper reflection he advises recognizing the legitimacy of the desires to organize a representational process around territory, on the one hand, versus around partisanship, on the other. To seek both requires a solution resting not on process (as in commissions) or standards (as in requiring partisan symmetry) but, he indicates, on a wholesale revision of rules to something similar to the German mixed-member proportional system.

Keena and his team's second installment rests on the same premise as their 2016 book. The post-2010 undemocratic redistricting machinations by state legislatures were all but invited by the Supreme Court's hands-off decision in *Vieth v. Jubelirer*. Here the authors explore the effect of this decision for state legislative districts. They are able to check on partisan bias—aka, partisan asymmetry—in 95 of the 99 state legislative chambers (data from Alabama and Mississippi are incomplete), finding that 45 of the 95 maps are biased, and of these, 43 are biased in favor of Republicans. They proceed to investigate whether the 43–2 (pro-Republican to pro-Democratic) imbalance is the likely result of favorableness to Republicans because of residential concentrations of Democrats in and around urban centers or the connections among race, party, geography, and adherence to the Voting Rights Act. Their careful analysis provides this answer: “not really.” The residential and race–party circumstances are there to be

exploited if Republicans choose to do so, and they often do. But the team's evidence also shows that adding or introducing pro-Republican bias is easy enough to avoid when line drawing is in the hands of bipartisan, nonpartisan, or Democratic Party decision makers. In fewer words, bias is a choice, a political choice. In competitive states where bias makes its most meaningful difference, substantial bias shows up three-quarters of the time when one party controls the line drawing (for 25 of 33 chambers in competitive states). In the other 62 cases, substantial bias appears only about one-third of the time (20 of 62 chamber cases).

According to Keena et al.'s definition of partisan gerrymandering, it occurs only when there is a deliberate manipulation of boundaries to gain advantage. For there to be an identifiable gerrymander, this definition has them adopt an analytical framework requiring map-makers to have both motive and opportunity to exploit a situation. It follows that 25 of their 45 cases of substantial bias drawn by one party in competitive states are gerrymanders, but the other 20 cases are something else. To wit: "predicting partisan gerrymandering is hardly rocket science; it occurs only when politicians, who stand to gain from biased maps, are in charge of the process and do not need bipartisan support to enact the district plan" (p. 12). The definition and its attendant analytical framework are of no major consequence standing alone; as a factual inference. Keena et al. find 25 gerrymanders (24 of which are extreme Republican gerrymanders) and 20 miscues.

However, such a definition and framework invite confusion as the coauthors turn to a series of interesting analyses of gerrymandering's policy consequences. They find that the most gerrymandered legislatures—or are they the most biased, deliberately chosen or not?—were more likely than others to enact restrictions on voting rights, abortion, Obamacare, and COVID-19 responses. The confusion arises again when they argue that partisan gerrymandering is a fundamental assault on democracy for, among other reasons, how it dilutes the value of votes. But, of course, dilution is the consequence of biased maps, regardless of whether the lines are drawn by politicians who stand to gain from them.

Modest degrees of ambiguity or not, the central message is clear: the pernicious politics of gerrymandering over the past decade teaches us that something needs to be done. What is that something? Here, Keena et al. meet up with Medvic in seeing two paths forward: line drawing could be handed over to independent commissions (or courts), or the single-member district plurality system could be abandoned in favor of multimember districts with proportionality rules (MMD PR).

Because, as Keena and coauthors show, the obvious answer to why we see gerrymandering is (more often than not) politics and because, as Medvic emphasizes, choosing

the rules to adopt commissions or MMD PR is also a matter of political choice, it is difficult to see a path out of the gerrymandering thicket through the political choice to adopt commissions or MMD PR. Absent a constitutionally derived, enforceable rule that the *Rucho* decision says does not exist, "no way out" is that decision's woeful but likely legacy for at least the next generation. All those interested in the quality of democracy in the United States should read these books, expand the readership by enlisting them in undergraduate and graduate courses, and consider their implications.

A Constitution for the Living: Imagining How Five Generations of Americans Would Rewrite the Nation's Fundamental Law. By Beau Breslin. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021. 384p. \$28.00 cloth.

Founding Factions: How Majorities Shifted and Aligned to Shape the U.S. Constitution. By Jeremy C. Pope and Shawn Treier. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020. 222p. \$75.00 cloth.
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At first glance, these two books seem only superficially connected by dint of a shared focus on the Constitution of the United States. Beau Breslin's description of a practice of generational constitutional conventions provides a broad and rich counterfactual constitutional history that stretches fully across the history of the United States, even peering into the near future. Jeremy C. Pope and Shawn Treier, by comparison, provide a deep examination of a single summer—albeit a vitally important one—of US constitutional history: they offer a close analysis of the votes of delegates to the Philadelphia convention of 1787 to retell the story of the convention. Breslin's project is by its nature speculative in method, whereas Pope and Treier's is driven by data. Breslin invites the reader to imagine "comprehensive constitution change" (p. xviii), whereas Pope and Treier guide the reader to "a renewed attention to ... original design" (p. 169). But despite different emphases, the two books join together in two important ways: first, in an attention to the organization of, and thus possibilities for, constitutional conventions, and second, in the convergence of both books on a shared call for an understanding of constitution-making as an intensely political act.

Breslin's *A Constitution for the Living* represents something unusual—perhaps even novel—as a piece of political science. In the face of modern political science's hunger for ever-greater empirical grounding, Breslin steps bravely into a speculative space—but not the speculative space of game theories or rational choice models, of an existence bound by rules and abstract and interchangeable