

congressional politics, southern politics, and American political development.

The Cash Ceiling: Why Only the Rich Run for Office—and What We Can Do about It. By Nicholas Carnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018. 344p. \$29.95 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592719000112

— Danielle M. Thomsen, *University of California, Irvine*

Nicholas Carnes's research has given new life to the study of class in American politics. His earlier work delved into how the dearth of working-class legislators matters for policy outcomes and the quality of political representation. His most recent book, *The Cash Ceiling*, builds on this agenda and asks why there is such a shortage of working-class Americans in elected office. The figures are indeed dismal: Individuals with working-class backgrounds make up around half of the population but a mere 2% of Congress and, at the high end, 10% of city councilors. Carnes provides the first empirical examination of the reasons for this disparity and, in doing so, gives class a rightful place in studies of candidate emergence.

It is rare for scholars to have such an open empirical terrain. While a variety of reasons come to mind as to why workers are underrepresented in politics, the book marshals an impressive array of data to actually put them to the test. The chapters tackle several possible explanations, including the notions that working-class individuals are unfit to govern or that voters would not support working-class candidates. The evidence instead points to a much different conclusion. The central argument of the book is that workers are less likely to hold office because they are less likely to run in the first place, not because they are unqualified or because voters prefer more affluent candidates.

Carnes develops a Qualified-Run-Succeed (QRS) Model for thinking about why social groups are underrepresented in office. The basic idea is that there are many stages in which individuals are screened out of the candidate emergence process. Some individuals do not have the necessary skills and qualifications to hold office; most who are qualified still do not run; and many who run do not win. The group will be underrepresented relative to its numbers in the population if they are disproportionately screened out at any stage.

The empirical analyses draw on a mountain of data and a variety of methods to identify the stage at which workers are screened out. The results from several original surveys of political candidates, party leaders, and voters suggest that for workers, the Qualified and Succeed stages are unlikely to be the problem. Workers are just as likely to have the qualifications that both party leaders and voters deem important, and workers are just as likely to think they are qualified to run. Results from actual elections and survey experiments further demonstrate

that voters are just as willing to support working-class candidates.

Rather, the scale tilts toward the Run stage. The main barrier keeping workers out is the “cash ceiling”—the many burdens associated with office seeking and the extensive resources that campaigning requires. In addition, workers are less likely to be recruited and encouraged to run by political elites, party leaders, and interest groups. To further delve into these mechanisms, Carnes leverages observational data to show that workers hold fewer offices in states with more burdensome elections and run less often in places where elections are more expensive. Workers also hold more seats and run more often in states where unions are stronger, perhaps because workers are more plugged into the networks of political leaders.

After uncovering the hurdles that working-class individuals face, the book then considers a crucial next question: What can be done? Most of the commonly cited solutions hold little promise because they do not address the underlying reasons why workers do not run. Higher salaries for legislators do not alleviate the burden of unpaid campaigning, and there is little evidence that the public financing of elections has much of an impact on the number of workers who run or win. Instead, interventions that are targeted and tailored to the specific needs of working-class Americans are more likely to be successful, such as candidate recruitment efforts, training programs, seed money, and political scholarships.

The scope of the book is beyond impressive. It provides the first analysis of the reasons that working-class Americans are underrepresented in office, but it is much more than a first cut. Examining any one of the stages in the Qualified-Run-Succeed Model of candidate emergence is difficult, but Carnes seamlessly weaves through all three. The theoretical and empirical contributions will spark new discussions and debates across subfields in American politics, yet many of the central insights have the clearest and most direct implications for the study of group underrepresentation and the study of candidate emergence more generally.

First, the findings raise new questions about how the QRS Model varies across groups. For example, since the early 2000s, gender and politics scholars have focused largely on the Run stage to understand women's underrepresentation. One of the leading explanations for why women are less likely to run than men is that women are less likely to think they are qualified. In other words, the Qualified and Run stages are tied together for women but not for workers. From a gender and politics angle, the finding that workers do perceive themselves to be just as qualified to run for office is fairly surprising. The white-collar ethos of government and the dearth of “worker role models” in office, particularly high-level offices, do not seem to dampen political ambition among workers. Uncovering this kind of variation will inspire further

discussions of where and how different underrepresented groups are screened out.

Second, the empirical approach invites a fresh dialogue about the makeup of potential candidate pools. Carnes rightly notes that we know so little about class and candidate entry in large part because traditional candidate pools are based on the professional backgrounds of those who tend to be elected, and these pools by definition exclude workers. Carnes thus constructs a new pool based on the traits and qualifications that are viewed as desirable for politicians. The empirical strategy is both creative and necessary for the research question at hand. At the same time, most people with these traits and qualifications, workers and nonworkers alike, will never run for office, and so we might wonder whether this kind of pool is too broad. Nevertheless, the approach shifts the potential candidate pool from who tends to be elected to who could be elected and opens new conceptual doors in the study of candidate emergence.

Of course, the scope of the book means that other questions are left for future research. For instance, the sizable difference between the representation of workers in local and federal office (10% and 2%, respectively) is ripe for further exploration. While the pattern is consistent with the argument that higher levels of office are more burdensome, a deeper dive across cities would be a valuable extension of the project. In fact, Carnes notes that in some cities, workers even make up a majority of the city council, raising a host of questions about the conditions under which they were elected and the impact they have on legislative outcomes.

It is clear that *The Cash Ceiling* will leave a mark on the discipline, but its impact will almost certainly extend beyond academia as well. The topic is interesting and important. The writing is engaging, clear, and accessible. The book shines a spotlight on a group of Americans who have been entirely overlooked in studies of descriptive representation. It makes a convincing case for why working-class individuals are underrepresented in politics and provides direction for how this inequality can be rectified. And all the while, Carnes keeps big ideas in American politics at the forefront, reminding us that having a seat at the table matters and compelling us to imagine how representative democracy can be better.

Is Racial Equality Unconstitutional? By Mark Golub. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 232p. \$65.00 cloth. doi:10.1017/S1537592719000185

— Richard L. Pacelle, Jr., *University of Tennessee*

A corollary of the proposition that you cannot tell a book by its cover might be the argument that you cannot tell a book by its title. There are books that have provocative titles but narratives that turn out to be anything but. That is not the case with Mark Golub's *Is Racial Equality*

Unconstitutional? The very idea of the title is jarring, and at first blush the answer would seem to be “of course not.” But Golub sustains the argument throughout and makes the case (a pessimistic one, to be sure) that the answer might be “yes” under the current Constitution. Along the way to that conclusion there are some very interesting paths and alleys.

Race is *the* intractable American problem. Forced segregation in the United States ended just 65 years ago, and there were people living when the Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) who were the children and grandchildren of people held as slaves. How could a hopefully color-blind society overcome that kind of historical legacy? Gunnar Myrdal wrote the classic *The American Dilemma* (1944) to discuss the oppression of African Americans. He was optimistic that the United States could ultimately surmount those problems. Golub is considerably less sanguine about the potential for equality and a truly color-blind society.

As the author explains, ever since the birth of politics and government, it has been clear that framing is critical to political discourse. And so it is with the notion of a “color-blind” constitution. What could be more universally acceptable than the aspiration that our society adopts a perspective that is free of racial distinctions? Of course, it is not that easy. A color-blind approach would harden or freeze existing inequalities. So the alternative is to let race be used on a limited basis to rectify past inequalities. Color consciousness is a means to color blindness as an end. Aspirational color blindness is future oriented and accepts the need for color consciousness in the short term. That is contrasted with a view of the present that focuses on the impermissible introduction of race because it ensures the continued divisiveness of race as an issue. For conservatives, the use of affirmative action makes race matter, thus undermining the very goals of ending race consciousness. This debate is not merely a sterile academic exchange; it is the basis of public policy and legal doctrine and has consequences that influence every part of our lives as individuals and of society as a collective.

There are a number of memorable passages in the book used to illustrate such contrasts and the dilemmas that ensue from them. Golub wonders what it would look like if Barack Obama and Clarence Thomas had to pen personal statements for law school that had to be color-blind. He deconstructs John Marshall Harlan's heroic “color-blind Constitution” dissent and takes some of the patina off of it. He combines a broad span of political theory and constitutional doctrine into a wide-ranging discussion of the evolution of race as an issue. Unfortunately, the issue appears stuck, as many issues are these days, in an infinite regress. In part that is why Golub devotes a chapter to an analysis of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, arguing that it “remains relevant today, not only as an artifact of past racism, but also because the case informs