

Second, future work needs to examine the generalizability of the conditions for persuasiveness that Salamone develops. Most notably, it is likely that survey respondents realized they were being deceived in the gay marriage decision since the survey was fielded before the Court's final decision on that topic. On the less salient issues, it is less likely that respondents knew they were being deceived. As a result, the strength of the experimental treatment likely varies alongside the salience of the case, potentially confounding some of the relationships Salamone observes. Future work should examine the Court's persuasive power across an even broader set of issue areas in order to cement our understanding of the Court's ability to shape public opinion.

Perceptions of a Polarized Court represents an important advance in our understanding of the relationship between the Supreme Court and public opinion, by making prominent the role of media coverage as an intervening factor and illuminating the conditional effect of issue salience on the Court's ability to affect public opinion. This book is a must-read for all who are interested in the role of the Supreme Court in the American political system and in American life more generally.

From Tolerance to Equality: How Elites Brought America to Same-Sex Marriage. By Darel E. Paul. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018. 256p. \$39.95 cloth, \$39.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592719000355

— Alison Gash, *University of Oregon*

In 2015, the Supreme Court ended a decades-long battle waged by conservative policymakers and voters to statutorily and constitutionally bar same-sex couples from receiving wedding licenses. Before 2003, same-sex couples had never enjoyed the rights and benefits of marriage. Nevertheless, in 1996 more than 15 states and Congress had decided to explicitly outlaw same-sex marriage as a preventive measure. Voters and public officials feared a wave of judicial rulings supporting same-sex marital rights and hoped that state bans would sufficiently thwart that possibility. By 2006, more than 40 states had barred gay couples from marrying—most through constitutional amendments. Of course, in the end, conservative concerns about judicial challenges came to fruition. Both state and federal courts played a leading role in dismantling marriage bans—and, on the whole, created a more equitable world for same-sex couples and their children.

This story—the judicial pathway from marriage bans to marriage equality—has been widely explored. Far less known, however, is the role played by social and economic elites in incrementally providing a space for same-sex couples to flourish. Darel E. Paul's *From Tolerance to Equality* shines some much-needed light on this under-examined question. Paul asks one main question: how did corporate elites catalyze public support for same-sex

marriage? He argues that “existing accounts” of same-sex marriage “emphasize the role of activists and the process of moral growth,” yet ignore the importance of “Corporate America, normalization's most powerful ally” (p. 11). The author endeavors to demonstrate the unusual role that corporate support played in promoting, rather than following, public acceptance for gay couples.

Paul dispatches two theories in order to scaffold the assertion that support for marriage equality hinged on social and economic elites. First, he argues that “the evolution of the normalization of homosexuality in the United States”—which he defines as the transition from public tolerance to public and private acceptance—required elites to distinguish between (and then separately pursue) individual and familial equality. Paul explains that “the family track was complete after twenty years while the individual track still carries on into its fifth decade” (p. 21). Second, he postulates the importance of social class in fostering acceptance for marriage equality. The significance of social class moves far beyond income and labor status, he argues. Class also determines “cultural practices and attitudes around language, art, leisure, and food—as well as sexuality, marriage and the family” (p. 49).

In order to support his focus on social class, Paul marshals both public opinion data and anecdotal evidence of elite support for marriage, identifying the significance of elite characteristics (region, “fertility,” valuation of familial structures) and the timing of critical corporate strategies. The end result is a helpful collection of lesser-known factors that, in both big ways and small, helped pave the road to marriage equality. Readers of the book will learn about the largely hidden role that corporate elites played in charting a course of acceptance and support for gay couples and the location of the most potent class-based marriage equality battles.

That said, while *From Tolerance to Equality* provides a welcome addition to a rich scholarship on marriage equality, there are several shortcomings that minimize its utility as a stand-alone text on the subject. First, Paul's account of marriage equality is incomplete. He downplays and obscures the important role that courts played in legitimizing lesbian and gay families, in particular encouraging couples and families to press for full equality in the spaces that he regards as the most critical to elite progress. For instance, family courts played an essential role in legalizing coparenting gay and lesbian couples—which in many areas forced employers, schools, and service providers to expand their family-based provisions to include gay couples. Similarly, Paul wrongly attributes the fall of state bans to federal courts, arguing that “once federal judges began reviewing same-sex marriage lawsuits beginning in 2010 . . . state level DOMAs [Defense of Marriage Acts] fell like dominoes” (p. 35). A more precise narrative would account for the importance of early state marriage-equality decisions in exerting upward pressure on federal

courts. Advocates subsequently leveraged these state court opinions to compel federal courts to overturn the federal ban on same-sex marriage, which, in turn, prompted additional state and federal reversals of state-level bans.

In important ways, this disengagement with litigation as a factor in elite acceptance is surprising. Litigation served as an important location of, and motivation for, corporate support. Employers served as subjects of and participants in marriage and parenting cases—as witnesses, examples, or amicus brief signatories. In this way, Paul’s story about social class does not stand outside or even alongside the more mainstream story of litigant activism. Rather, elites are both vessels for and instigators of court progress.

Second, the root of Paul’s incomplete treatment of marriage equality is his inattention to the wide array of scholarship on the topic. Early on, he focuses on three relatively well-known, but by no means representative, accounts of marriage equality to argue that the movement is wrongly “understood by others as a force of the political Left” (p. 11). Yet the scholarship on marriage equality is both diverse and richly nuanced. The author’s sparse coverage entirely misses this empirically rich narrative and denies readers the opportunity to understand the implications of his findings against this dynamic and complex struggle. Paul’s treatment of the scholarship on marriage and family is similarly incomplete (pp. 96–97). Although he draws on a handful of family scholars, he largely disengages these theories from their context. In the end, these sections read as ad hoc (and sometimes gendered and racialized) mischaracterizations and misapplications of theory to support specific empirical goals.

This omission of both the facts on the ground and the scholarship that analyzes them causes Paul to commit a third error, albeit one that has been committed by

many others. He assumes and asserts that gay couples have achieved full equality—and that they did so in a very short amount of time. On the first point, marriage equality is in its infancy—and remains highly contested in communities across the country. Although states are required to provide marriage licenses to gay couples, it remains to be seen how far that ruling extends. Federal litigation on the rights of wedding service providers to deny services to gay couples, and state litigation disconnecting the benefits of marriage from the right to receive a marriage license, suggest that there is infinitely more room for opponents to make headway than the book implies. Neither has the pace toward equality been rapid. Simply put, Paul’s starting point is wrong. It may have taken only 20 years for the Court to overturn *formal* marriage bans, but gay couples had been attempting to overturn the universally accepted *presumptive* ban since the 1970s. And of course, until very recently the public has always held strong and highly negative opinions toward gay couples. To say that acceptance has been swift and is complete entirely ignores both historical and ongoing contestation.

These shortcomings aside, however, *From Tolerance to Equality* asks important questions and provides some valuable insights. In numerous communities across the country the presence of same-sex couples is relatively, and surprisingly, unremarkable. Making a corporate class connection to this historically unexpected shift not only makes sense but is also strangely absent from most mainstream accounts of marriage equality progress. Paul’s contribution in this regard is important. Scholars wanting more information on the actors, factors, and mechanisms that helped set the stage for marriage equality will want to add *From Tolerance to Equality* to their library of marriage equality scholarship.

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse. By Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 270p. \$99.99 cloth, \$29.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592719000586

— Thomas B. Pepinsky, *Cornell University*

Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz’s book *How Dictatorships Work* is the latest addition to two decades of influential research on authoritarian regimes: how they come to power, how their institutions work, and how they fall. Readers familiar with the research agenda that Geddes launched with her essay “What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?” (*Annual Review of Political Science* 2, 1999) might be tempted to approach this book as a synthesis of that agenda. That would be a mistake, for the book does not summarize that body of

research, but rather extends and modernizes it. Rather than piecing together various bits of the logic of authoritarianism, as do various articles by these three authors and others, a book length treatment affords Geddes, Wright, and Frantz the ability to weave a narrative that reflects the life course of an authoritarian regime, from its birth and consolidation to its operation and eventual collapse. *How Dictatorships Work* is clearly written in an engaging style, and the concluding chapter offers policy recommendations that might find a sympathetic ear in Washington, DC, and among the international donor community.

Abstracting away the details contained across the chapters, there are two broad themes that run throughout the book, the first one explicit, the second implicit. The explicit theme is that the conditions under which authoritarian regimes are born determine how they work. The authors focus on what they term the “seizure group,” which is “the small group that literally ousts the incumbent