

Republican woman committee chair during that Congress (p. 84).

Chapters 4 and 5 delve into the tension between increasing partisan polarization and the desire of members to work across the aisle in crafting bipartisan legislation. The party polarization discussion is perhaps notable for the extent to which the comments could be from any member of the Congress. What it does offer, however, is a strong reminder that even so-called women's issues are not viewed monolithically by women: Some of the strongest partisan debates are over issues such as abortion and immigration. Alternatively, Chapter 5 finds that women from both parties believe that they are more likely to work together in a bipartisan fashion than are their male colleagues. An intriguing suggestion, ripe for future research, is that this increased, female-led bipartisanship is an unexpected, positive result of women seeking single-sex spaces, such as Barbara's Mikulski's (D-MD) famous female senator dinners in response to their minority status in Congress.

The final chapters grapple with how women being in the room changes the conversation itself. Here is where the book makes its most significant contributions. The authors find that women in office alter both the policy agenda and the institution itself (Chaps. 6–7). They deliberately do not define “women's issues,” instead letting the members do it themselves. This choice allows the diversity of issues to emerge and protects against privileging those championed by white, Democratic females. Notable is the discussion about the ways in which women of color adopt an “expanded agenda” to encompass both policy issues raised by nonminority women and those, such as mass incarceration and immigration, that more directly influence minorities (p. 166). These chapters focus not just on the issues women champion but also, perhaps more importantly, on a distinct set of perspectives and experiences offered by women that alters the conversations themselves.

For example, the authors highlight how strong policy differences divide women with respect to abortion, but also how they all prioritize the issue given its personal stake in their lives; these personal ties then change the content of the conversations. In all of the policy areas discussed, the overarching point is that the default of a white male does not actually reflect reality: This group comprises less than half the population, and, with respect to many issues across the policy spectrum, a relatively small minority of those affected. The result is that policy solutions that use this group and its perspective as the default may be inadequate. Female members' discussions about women's health, and especially minority women's health, sexual assault, and issues facing primary caregivers (of both children and the elderly), as well as the experiences and policy issues championed by female veterans, Latinas, African American women, and Asian American women,

illustrated these concerns, and the wide diversity in perspective among women with respect to them.

Diversity can also change the institution itself, in ways big and small. The authors draw out from their interviews how increasing the number of women and people of color in positions of power helps alter our conception of who can hold these positions in the first place. That in turn increases the likelihood that women, and people of color, will be invited to the table. The female members also suggest that women come with a different perspective on *how* to lead and legislate, one that is about “getting it done,” with an emphasis on pragmatism and consensus over ego and individual accomplishment. These segments provide a wealth of ideas for future research.

I both thoroughly enjoyed and utterly hated reading *A Seat at the Table*—it is a fascinating exploration of what female members of Congress think and how they perceive themselves and the world they operate within. But I was also repeatedly struck by the thought that it is incredible that women in power still feel the need to justify why they should have a seat at the table at all, much less why their having a seat matters quite a lot. Even today, the United States continues to struggle with ensuring that those most affected by issues are not left out of the rooms and institutions where these conversations take place altogether. And these concerns are exponentially magnified when we turn to women of color and, to a lesser degree, conservative women.

Dittmar, Sanbonmatsu, and Carroll do an excellent job of illuminating, through the voices of Members of Congress, what the various findings we have seen reported over the past few decades actually mean to those they most directly impacted. This book brings to life many of the rigorous empirical studies that have been recently published, and does a great job connecting the interview findings to these previous studies. And by doing so, it makes many of these findings more real for both scholars and laypersons alike, while also reaffirming the findings of these various studies. It also pushes the literature further by emphasizing the heterogeneity of women's views and experiences. The authors remind us that a seat is still needed for women, and that we actually need multiple seats to ensure that the totality of women's experiences are represented in the U.S. Congress.

**Perceptions of a Polarized Court: How Division among Justices Shapes the Supreme Court's Public Image.** By

Michael F. Salamone. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018.

214p. \$94.50 cloth, \$32.95 paper.

doi:10.1017/S1537592719000471

— Michael J. Nelson, *Pennsylvania State University*

The Senate's fall 2018 confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh cemented a likely Republican majority on the Supreme Court for a generation and drew attention to that

institution's perceived politicization. Scholars, journalists, and members of the public have sought to understand whether these events will undermine the Court's standing in the eyes of the American people. We are lucky, then, that this same season marked the publication of Michael F. Salamone's *Perceptions of a Polarized Court*, a book that addresses these important questions carefully and systematically.

Salamone's primary interest comes in understanding the ability of the Supreme Court to shape public opinion. Scholars have long sought to understand the conditions under which Americans will accept a displeasing decision from the U.S. Supreme Court and when the Court's opinion will have enough persuasive heft to alter their opinions on an issue. One major contribution of the book is its systematic approach to addressing all of the pieces that must fall into place before the public's views can be shaped by the Court's decision. Salamone persuasively argues that because typical Americans are not avid Court watchers, the public relies on the media to tell them what the Court decided. And when covering the Court, journalists face their own constraints. Not every decision is newsworthy, and journalists have to decide what details to use to teach the public about the Court's decision. He argues that one particular type of detail—the level of judicial dissensus—plays an outsized role in journalists' decision-making process. As they learn about a decision from the media, the American people draw upon the details included in news coverage of a decision, especially the amount of dissensus, to determine whether or not to accept a judicial decision and whether to update their views on the issue in question. Salamone's major contribution is to articulate specific conditions under which the Court's decisions are likely to be covered by the media and to persuade the public.

The book's organization follows chronologically the chain of events that accompany a judicial decision. Following a review of the existing literature in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 reviews the evolution of dissensus on the U.S. Supreme Court and articulates three hypotheses that might characterize the relationship between dissensus and the public's reaction to the decision. The "Marshall-Warren" hypothesis states that any dissent in a case could harm the Court's public standing. The "Borah Hypothesis" suggests that the Court's standing is only harmed through repeated 5–4 decisions. The "Procedural Representation" hypothesis suggests that dissent might actually be beneficial; by proving to the public that alternative arguments were heard and respected, the presence of dissent in a case could actually improve the Court's public standing.

Chapter 3 provides the first of three sets of major empirical analyses. Based on coverage of the Supreme Court in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post* from 2005 to 2013, Salamone tests the hypothesis that increased dissensus

affects the probability that a decision is covered in the press. The analysis uses a unique dependent variable: the change in case salience (newspaper coverage) from before the decision to after the decision. He finds that as the amount of dissensus in a decided case increases, the amount of newspaper coverage it receives increases as well.

The focus on journalists' decisions continues in Chapter 4, which analyzes the content of newspaper coverage of the Court. Salamone's theory suggests that increased dissensus affects the likelihood that a journalist will frame a decision in ideological terms. The results support the theory. As dissensus increases, so do a) the likelihood that a decision is framed in ideological terms and b) the number of justices mentioned by name in the newspaper. Taken together, Chapters 3 and 4 provide a comprehensive—and much needed—account of the foundations of case salience, demonstrating convincingly that case salience and disagreement on the Court are thoroughly intertwined.

Chapter 5 moves the focus away from journalists to the American people. Salamone tests the three hypotheses set forth in Chapter 2 in a novel, nationally representative survey experiment. Respondents learned about three hypothetical Supreme Court decisions at varying levels of salience: gay rights (highly salient), employee privacy (moderate salience), and contract disputes (low salience). The level of dissensus among the justices was randomized for each decision, with some respondents learning of a unanimous decision, some learning of an 8–1 decision, others learning of a 5–4 decision, and a control group getting no information about dissensus. The dependent variables in the analysis are acceptance of the Court's decision and agreement with the Court's decision. The results defy easy explanation; generally, on high-salience issues, public opinion seems to be crystalized, and it is difficult for the Court to have much persuasive power; on lower-salience issues, the Court's power is greater, and dissensus may sometimes increase support for the decision and foster opinion change. These results—which provide specific conditions under which the Court has the ability to affect public opinion—provide an important theoretical and empirical foundation for future work.

The book presents two obvious paths forward for those interested in understanding the Court's persuasive role in American society. First, like much of the research on this topic, Salamone tends to conflate a case's salience with its newspaper coverage. This enables him to use the level of dissensus in a case to predict the amount of news coverage a case receives. Future work should explore the potentially endogenous relationship between case salience and dissensus on the court: More salient cases may make justices more willing to pay the costs of writing a dissenting opinion (suggesting that salience causes dissensus on the Court). At the same time, the author's findings suggest that dissensus drives changes in visible case salience. This relationship is ripe for experimental testing.

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