

services tend to be yearly priorities; elections are not. What is the incentive for state legislators or local officials to appropriate millions for new election machinery when most elections are not close, when most people (a majority of the voting-age population, even a majority of eligible voters) do not vote, and when most of them are more often than not uninformed and unconcerned about issues that do not affect them directly?

A specialist in elections law and a political activist (see her Afterword), Gerken is concerned about election issues and troubled that the public, even the attentive public, is not equally concerned. Her book seeks to inflame these issues by exposing the problems and the political and federal impediments to solving them. She argues for a solution based on social science data and incentivized by a democratic-based competition among electoral districts and states.

Three measurable criteria serve as the calculus for her Index: registration, balloting, and counting (p. 123). The objective should be to ensure that all voters have an opportunity to register, to vote, and to have their votes counted accurately. From the perspective of election administrators, the merits of a democratically based competitive system include improving their scores, collecting more and better data on elections, and using low scores as a vehicle for rallying public and political support for more resources to rectify the problems.

The costs of developing the Index and getting states to participate would be minimal, according to Gerken. No national legislation would be necessary although then-Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama did introduce bills to facilitate the collection of critical democratic data. States would not be burdened with an additional federal mandate. Innovation and experimentation at the state and local levels would still be possible, even more probable, given the competition to be number one.

When I began reading Gerken's work, I was dubious of her project and the way she presented it. There were lots of anecdotes, little data, and a deceptively simple writing style that was too readable for most political scientists to take seriously as scholarship. Why would *Perspectives on Politics* want to review such a book? I soon found out that I was wrong on several counts: The anecdotes personalized the issue with concrete experiences from election officials and index developers; the lack of data is part of the problem, one that the book is intended to help rectify; and the author's engaging prose still builds a powerful case for the Index, an argument without a lot of legal jargon but with a wealth of up-to-date, political science citations. Gerken is well aware of the pertinent literature and uses it effectively to describe the information we have about voting and the information we lack. I found her argument compelling. I was particularly impressed by the way in which she anticipated criticisms and responded to them. The psychological underpinning upon which she bases

her case is equally impressive. This is a very good book with an important idea. I hope that it gains a wide and appreciative readership that generates a much-needed debate on election reform in the United States.

Zelden has also written an important scholarly work. Most of *Bush v. Gore* painstakingly details the politics and legal maneuvering that in occurred in Florida and Washington following the controversial presidential vote in 2000. The author presents both description and analysis. He writes very clearly and has carefully researched the controversy, producing probably the most definitive study of the 2000 Florida presidential vote to date.

Comprehensive in his approach as well as his analysis, Zelden critiques the Supreme Court's decision. He calls it a self-inflicted wound and a missed opportunity. The wound, which embroiled the Court once again in the political thicket, raised allegations of the justices' partisanship, their overreach, and the conservative majority's inconsistency with its own nonactivist jurisprudence. The missed opportunity relates to the narrowness of the decision and the Court's failure to allow the equal protection standard, upon which the majority based its opinion, to be applied broadly to other election issues. Zelden concludes that the Court not only reduced its stature in the eyes of many voters but also failed to generate a debate on the nature of democratic elections and the need to recognize the distance of the gap between the theory and practice of American democracy. That gap highlights a significant and salient issue for a country that prides itself on its democratic values and the political system that those values have produced.

**Do Voters Look to the Future? Economics and Elections.** By Brad Lockerbie. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008. 170p. \$65.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.  
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— Michael H. Murakami, *Georgetown University*

The economic voting literature is vast. With a search on Google Scholar of "economic voting" yielding more than 3,000 articles, one would imagine it quite difficult for a scholar to break new ground. Yet Brad Lockerbie does so in his new book, not by providing a novel theoretical framework but by revisiting classic ones with an expansive examination of the importance of prospective evaluations for federal elections in the United States. As the title of the book reveals, he weighs in on one of the two most important and long-standing debates in the economic voting literature: Do citizens vote retrospectively, looking back rather myopically to past performances of incumbent government officials? Or do they vote prospectively by utilizing a wider array of political information to form expectations about the party that will provide better outcomes in the future? As Lockerbie notes, the answer to this question is hardly trivial but, rather, speaks

directly to larger concerns over the meaning of election outcomes, the competence of voters, and democratic accountability. (The other important question, whether citizens vote sociotropically or out of their own personal economic well-being, is tackled, somewhat secondarily, in Chapter 6, to be discussed).

The overall thrust of his results is clear: U.S. voters do look toward the future, evaluating both the Democratic and Republican Parties' ability to provide for future economic success. More often than not, retrospective evaluations operate primarily by influencing prospective ones. While neither of these conclusions is particularly surprising given the existing literature, the sheer exhaustiveness of the author's analyses—he covers all presidential elections from 1956 to 2000 and congressional elections from 1956 to 2002—ensures that they cannot be dismissed as the result of particular eras, elections, offices, or candidates.

The organization of the book is straightforward: Each chapter investigates how retrospective and prospective evaluations influence a particular dependent variable of interest. Chapter 2 explores the bivariate relationship between retrospective and prospective evaluations. Chapter 3 investigates the effect of these evaluations on party identification. Next, Chapters 4 and 5 explore the significance of these evaluations for presidential and congressional vote choice, respectively. Chapter 6 examines the relative importance of sociotropic versus egocentric prospective evaluations. And lastly, the final empirical chapter departs from respondent-level analysis to investigate how successful prospective evaluations are, when aggregated, in predicting aggregate election outcomes.

The literature review is tight and focused, relating what the author considers to be important contexts for larger normative, positive theoretical, and methodological debates, rather than an exhaustive summary. Those looking for a complete guide to the vast, varied, and often seemingly contradictory economic voting literature, will have to turn elsewhere.

Chapters 3 and 4 are perhaps the most insightful due to Lockerbie's thoughtful efforts to confront the issue of partisan rationalization. The concerns are twofold. First, retrospective evaluations, as many other researchers have demonstrated, are influenced noticeably by respondents' partisan loyalties. Democrats just do not think that the economy has been as bad as Republicans do when a Democrat is president, and vice versa. The second is that expectations about the future may be better predictors of political behavior than retrospective evaluations only because it is easier for partisans to imagine better (or worse) scenarios about future performance of their own (or opposing) party when unconstrained by current realities or recent macroeconomic fortunes. Prospections may just be an opportunity to indulge partisan inclinations.

Lockerbie's individual-level statistical models demonstrate that such partisan rationalization plays an impor-

tant role. In 1960 and 1980, for example, these "indirect" effects of *past* party identification are equal to or greater than the total effects (indirect plus direct effects) of either retrospective or prospective evaluations themselves on *current* party identification. This is clever analysis that demonstrates the potential for evaluations to be colored by partisan rationalizations, while simultaneously showing the limitations of this explanation for an understanding of the full political importance of voters' prospections. Once partisan rationalization is accounted for, not only do these prospections influence individuals' party identifications, but their influence is also significantly greater than the retrospective evaluations so prominently noted in Morris Fiorina's *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (1981).

Chapter 6 may seem slightly out of place in investigating whether voters' prospective evaluations are egocentric or sociotropic. Its analyses convincingly demonstrate that *both* personal (or familial) judgments and sociotropic ones play a significant role in predicting a variety of electoral behaviors and attitudes—results that may be unexpected in the context of the existing literature. However, by investigating data only from the 1992 elections, this chapter fails to echo the others in their thoroughness and, therefore, generalizability. The book is not without other shortcomings. For example, the author compares the  $R^2$ s among models with different numbers of independent variables (p. 44). Also, given the significant findings of prospective evaluations for House and Senate elections, I would like to have seen comparable partisan rationalization analysis, since that proved so illuminating in the chapters on party identification and presidential vote choice.

Ultimately, though, these concerns are small compared with the great effort taken by Lockerbie to ensure that most conclusions are generalizable beyond one particular election or political era. For those unsure of the power of retrospective evaluations to explain voter behavior in the United States, this book is quite possibly the most encyclopedic attempt to document their importance in presidential, House, and Senate elections over the past half century.

**Politics in the Pews: The Political Mobilization of Black Churches.** By Eric L. McDaniel. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008. 224p. \$70.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

**God and Government in the Ghetto: The Politics of Church-State Collaboration in Black America.**

By Michael Leo Owens. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. 304p. \$55.00 cloth, \$22.00 paper.  
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— Yvette M. Alex-Assensoh, *Indiana University-Bloomington*

At the root of scholarship on the politics of the black church is an ongoing and salient debate about the extent to which African American churches are either opiates or catalysts. Adolph L. Reed, Jr. (1986), Gunnar Myrdal