

McCarthy concludes, may “produce more extreme policy outcomes and more variation in policies across states” (p. 324).

It is worth noting that most of the work in this volume preceded much of the turmoil of the Trump administration, whose full and lasting impact on governance in the United States will take years to sort out. It is very likely, however, that Donald Trump’s legacy will only reinforce some of the biggest anxieties that predated his election, anxieties that are richly analyzed in this book. Inequality has only increased, and fierce partisan conflict has surely deepened the forces of polarization. But despite the inability to provide an historical assessment of the Trump years, *Can America Govern Itself?* is nevertheless an important reminder that Trump did not create these forces but rather built his success on top of long-existing trends.

That makes this fascinating edited volume an even bigger contribution. It will be impossible to look ahead to the future without understanding how the US political system got to the present. *Can America Govern Itself?* not only helps us understand the historical roots of our current anxieties but it is also an invaluable guide to where Madison’s grand design has taken us—and to the questions we will need to answer if it is to survive, let alone thrive, into the mid-twenty-first century.

Black Women in Politics: Demanding Citizenship, Challenging Power, and Seeking Justice. Edited by Julia S. Jordan-Zachery and Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018. 314p. \$85.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592720000079

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The editors of *Black Women in Politics* have compiled an excellent set of chapters on current research on Black women in political science and the social sciences more broadly. They offer analyses of how many articles in mainstream journals have been published on Black women and assess how likely it is that the paucity of research on Black women will be corrected. Intersectionality work, which includes an expanded notion of what constitutes the political and on how gender is also racialized, classed, and sexualized, is a way that groups rendered invisible in academia can be included. “Black women,” Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd writes, “have in fact been central, not marginal, to political development in the United States and elsewhere in the African Diaspora” (p. 17). The analyses presented in this volume offer a powerful corrective to interpretations of politics that are misleadingly taught as complete and as representative of Black women.

It is more than 25 years since the publication of Jewel Prestage’s “In Quest of the African American Political

Women” (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 515, 1991). Intersectionality as a paradigm is about the same age, credited to two scholars working simultaneously in the late 1980s. The book contains powerful symbolism from a variety of sources; for example, Black feminist scholars are “holed up” in the attic spaces of their disciplines and, in this way, “garreting” themselves like Harriet Jacobs did for seven years in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Plowing—or digging deeply into research—and garreting enable the advancement of a “liberating politics.” Professional groups such as the Association of Black Women Historians, conference workshops, specialized journals such as *Gender and Society*, and special symposia on Black women and women of color represent other forms of garreting. These networks provide mentoring, intellectual and personal support, and publication venues for Black women working in the field of Black women’s studies. Nevertheless, for those who engage in intersectional work, there are still racist and gendered barriers to receiving equal professional credit for their scholarship.

Today, some critics argue that intersectionality work has outlived its usefulness. Their main point is that the Black female remains too central in the framework to provide a good understanding of the broader social and political phenomena at work in Black communities. However, Jordan-Zachery and Alexander-Floyd write that the primary focus of intersectional work has never been identity politics but rather social justice. In their book, the analytic frame is to reimagine “Black women’s studies as a subfield within Africana studies and women’s and gender studies” (p. xxii). Black women’s studies can then display its methodological approaches and concepts in considering how Black women fight for conditions that improve their lives and the lives of their families.

Selections from the volume include Jenny Douglas’s “The Politics of Black Women’s Health in the UK.” With some exceptions, and in contrast to the United States, research on the health of Afro-Caribbean women has been scarce compared to the study of the health of Black men. There also tends to be an overemphasis on the mental health of Afro-Caribbeans, which reinforces stereotypes of pathology, especially among Black men. For example, Afro-Caribbeans are six times more likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia. Yet Blacks are less likely to receive treatment for their higher rates of depression, which may be a function of their reluctance to seek care. Surveys show that Afro-Caribbeans fear racial harassment, and this fear could negatively affect their health and well-being. Douglas contends that work experience, particularly low-wage and public-sector work; class; home life; and racial conditions also have impacts on health. She makes this case for Afro-Caribbean employees of the National Health Service, where they work as both cleaners and nurses. Both Black men and Black women in the United Kingdom are twice

as likely to die of a stroke under the age of 65 than other racial groups. In the end, Douglas's chapter suggests why there needs to be further work on how politics affects health, particularly the health of Black women.

"Hiding in Plain Sight" is Keesha M. Middlemass's study of Black women ex-felons. Lacking a clear rationale, a number of policies and laws that Middleman discusses make it difficult for ex-felons to reenter society. Her interviews with female clients of a nonprofit organization in Newark, New Jersey, find that they are well aware of these state-sanctioned barriers to rebuilding their lives, yet these women do not want to return to prison. Were these barriers made visible to government officials, lawmakers, and the public, the irrationality of a legal system that effectively marginalizes them would be exposed, and barriers to ex-felon reentry might be removed.

In "The Politics of Bread Making in Honduras's Garifuna Community," K. Melchor Quick Hall contends that this tribe is, in fact, Black. The author shows how family relations, winning recognition as an indigenous tribe, and the act of making cassava bread by Garifuna women are forms of resistance to neoliberal land reform in Honduras. Maziki Thame examines the leadership role of Jamaica's first woman prime minister, Portia Simpson-Miller. Simpson-Miller subverted negative stereotypes about Jamaican women to appeal to the poor but still was unable to overturn Jamaica's paternalistic power structure.

The campaign to fight obesity of Michelle Obama, the first Black First Lady, created a safe narrative and did not challenge deeply entrenched negative understandings of Black life. Grace E. Howard writes that the narrative that Obama chose was "the one with bootstraps," in which health and obesity were presented as the outcome of personal choices made by ethnic communities and the poor, children as well as adults. Because obesity in the Black community was largely presented as the product of bad parenting, the public health campaign did not address the role in fostering obesity of the lack of access to fresh food, medical care, and exercise space.

Tonya M. Williams's chapter surveys the engagement of health and reproductive rights nonprofits in Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas in the legislative debate leading to the passage of the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). To secure its passage, a deal was cut among lawmakers that blocked federal funds for abortion coverage. One-half of the surveyed nonprofit groups mobilized and engaged in demonstrations and petition drives during the legislative debate over the ACA, and one-half encouraged their constituents to contact their representatives. In in-depth interviews, the heads of these nonprofit groups expressed concern that the ACA might not benefit Black women equally because of their lack of knowledge about personal health care and limited experience with the health care system. Thus, as Williams shows, there was concern that the ACA could be another major

government program like Social Security that in its original enactment denied coverage to many Blacks. In addition, even though the ACA was designed to expand Medicare benefits to the poor in all 50 states, a number of conservative states chose not to implement that provision.

The editors of this volume contend, pessimistically, that, without a radical shift in the direction of inquiry in political science and the social sciences, Black women as political actors will remain invisible. Others would dispute the claim that, despite the growing visibility of Black women in US politics—for example, a Black woman served as First Lady from 2009 to 2016 and Kamala Harris ran for the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 2020—future research will continue to ignore the role of Black women in US politics and society. Other signs of change today could include Black women feminists moving from the margins to lead universities and departments, direct graduate programs and admissions, and edit major journals, as well as core courses taught at major universities on Black women in politics—some of which has already happened.

However, the editors leave one with the impression that, without real structural changes in the content of existing disciplines, pessimism about centering the experience of Black women in political science research, as well as in the social sciences more broadly, is generally warranted.

Primary Elections in the United States. By Shigeo Hirano and James M. Snyder Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 358p. \$99.99 cloth, \$34.99 paper.
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Primary elections evoke differing views about their role in American politics. Reformers in the early twentieth century advocated for primaries to eliminate the corruption they saw in nominating conventions. Early critics argued that primary voters would be less able to recognize the strengths of various candidates and that primaries would prevent parties from nominating balanced tickets. Contemporary critics argue that low turnout results in a primary electorate composed of more extreme voters who nominate more extreme candidates, which contributes to today's polarized politics. The large social science research on primary elections also provides contradictory evidence about the nature of these elections. Shigeo Hirano and James Snyder's excellent book provides a few central themes that clarify the influence of primary elections from the beginning of the twentieth century to the early years of the twenty-first century.

Foremost, Hirano and Snyder argue that not all primaries are alike. A dominant theme throughout their book