

Christopher J. Galdieri, Tauna S. Sisco, and Jennifer C. Lucas, eds. *Races, Reforms and Policy: Implications for the 2014 Midterm Elections*. Akron, OH: The University of Akron Press, 2017. vii, 180 pp. (\$29.99 paper).

How did the 2014 midterm election matter? What can 2014 tell us about midterm elections generally? In this volume a mix of scholars in a series of chapters try to answer those questions in their examination of the 2014 midterm elections. While the 2014 midterm elections were not as decisive as the 2010 midterms, when Democrats were voted out of power in the House of Representatives in a convincing manner, the 2014 midterm was also a consequential referendum on President Obama's administration. Republicans picked up an additional 13 seats in the House, expanding their majority and giving them their biggest margin since 1924. Republicans also regained control of the Senate.

The book is organized into four sections. The first is an overview of the 2014 midterm election that examines the role of the party of the president, presidential approval ratings, gerrymandering, incumbency, and polarization in understanding the 2014 election. The first section also considers how the nationalization of congressional elections led to Republican success in winning state legislative seats. The second section focuses on how the 2014 midterm campaigns played out at the state and local levels. The third part examines the voting process, with a particular focus on the issue of wait times for voting. The final section reviews the role of public policy in 2014 campaigns. More specifically, the chapters analyze what role the Affordable Care Act (ACA), immigration, and environmental policy played in shaping the outcomes of several races.

In the first chapter, Robert S. Erickson offers structural reasons for Republican success in the 2014 midterm election. The model takes into consideration variables like presidential approval, the party of the president, and party identification. The party of the president was the most influential and significant variable. Somewhat puzzling, however, was that the generic congressional ballot was not included in the model although it is mentioned several times in the discussion. The analysis on the role of natural and Republican made gerrymandering that favors Republicans is convincing. There are a few aspects of his analysis to which Erickson might have given more consideration. Two areas, for example, would be a deeper analysis of factors such as incumbency and polarization that influenced the 2014 election outcome.

Chad Kinsella and Scott Sedmak provide a complex narrative of how the national "wave" that led to Republican success in Congress filtered down to the state elections and helped Republicans take control of a number of state legislatures. While more descriptive than analytical, the chapter does offer what the authors believe will be the consequences of Republican control of state governments.

The focus on state and district level politics is found in chapters three through six. Robert E. Crew, Jr., Alexandra G. Cockerham, and Edward James III examine how a Democrat won in Florida's 2nd Congressional District that was rated "likely Republican." The authors detail Gwen Graham's campaign strategy for winning the district and test competing hypotheses on whether campaign fundamentals or campaign activities best explain Graham's vote share and voter turnout. Although the authors admit their analysis is limited by a small N, they do find that campaign fundamentals and campaign activities were linked to Graham's vote. Voter

turnout was unaffected by any of the variables in the model.

In chapter four Emily Wanless presents an interesting case study of South Dakota with her examination of the nationalization of elections from a campaign perspective. Wanless clearly lays out the theoretical perspective for the nationalization of US elections. She then applies the theoretical framework to the 2014 Senate election in South Dakota where a favored but underperforming Republican candidate transformed his campaign right before voters' eyes. Wanless reveals how the Republican incumbent shifted gears away from traditional "prairie politics" that emphasized personal interaction and began stressing national issues such as President Obama and his policies and linking his Democratic opponent to the president. The author describes how the Republican candidate rebounded to win the election, giving credence to the idea that nationalization is a strategy that can help win local elections.

In chapter five Adam Myers conducts a complex multifaceted statistical investigation to learn how the vote from the 2012 presidential election related to the 2014 Senate election in North Carolina. Using electoral and demographic data from the state's voter tabulation districts (VTDs), Myers shows that there was a strong association between 2012 presidential and 2014 senatorial voting patterns across North Carolina VTDs despite the difference in the total number of votes cast in each election. However, turnout differences between the 2012 and 2014 elections were not even across the VTDs. His analysis indicates that age and race were important predictors of VTD-level turnout decline. Of particular interest was the finding that rural VTDs had lower rates of turnout decline than non-rural VTDs. Myers concludes that the rural and urban divide may need to be taken into account along with age and race that explain the difference in turnout between presidential and midterm elections.

In the next chapter, Day, Sisco, and Galdieri use textual analysis to analyze how New Hampshire media employed the "frame" of carpetbagger to Scott Brown who ran for a Senate seat in 2014. However, the chapter reads more like a litany of mistakes from Brown and his bungling campaign than about media fixation about his residency. Would his residency issues have been a factor if he had run a credible campaign? We'll never know. Moreover, this is not an issue most candidates confront and so it's difficult to see how this discussion contributes to understanding the 2014 midterm election.

The next two chapters focus on wait times in line to vote in presidential elections. In the first one, Susan Fine and Charles Stewart address this issue in Florida, the state with the worst record of poll wait times. The authors point out that this is an important issue because hundreds of thousands of potential voters may not have voted because of excessive wait times. Using observational research, teams were sent out to 20 randomly selected precincts in one county that had a history of long wait times to vote. They found that it took just over 11 minutes from check-in to departure. The authors find that the county's capacity is sufficient for midterm elections using a 30 minute benchmark, but that additional capacity is needed for presidential elections to meet that same benchmark.

Chapter 8 presents another discussion on wait times by Michael C. Herron, Daniel A. Smith, Wendy Serra, and Joseph Bafumi. Their research not only includes an examination of wait times, but also exit polls to learn about perceptions of voter confidence in the election. The authors hypothesize that extensive waiting in line leads to lower voter confidence in the electoral

process. Using a series of ordered logistic regressions, the authors examine what variables correlate with wait times and whether those wait times are related to voter perceptions of ballot secrecy and intended tabulation. First, they find that whites, Hispanics, and wealthier voters report shorter wait times while older voters reported waiting longer in line than younger voters. Secondly, voters who reported waiting the longest had less confidence in ballot secrecy than that their vote would be counted.

The final three chapters in this volume link policy to the outcomes of the 2014 elections. The first one by Sean D. Forman is on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and outcomes in seven US Senate elections. The analysis in this chapter barely scratches the surface of these seven contests. With that said, Forman concludes that the ACA was not the top issue for voters and that the more traditional influences of presidential approval as well as a favorable electoral map led to Republican victories.

In chapter ten, Heather Silber Mohamed examines immigration reform as an issue for the 2014 elections. She begins with a discussion on how immigration influences partisan politics, and on President Obama's executive action, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), that he eventually delayed until after the 2014 election. Silber Mohamed tries to demonstrate the difficulties Democrats face in attracting a growing Latino constituency while not alienating white voters. However, four of the six Senate elections that the author points to were located in the South in states that contain small percentages of eligible Latino voters and where white voters have been steadily trending Republican in recent elections.

The final chapter in the volume has Mark J. O'Gorman looking at how Republicans addressed the issues of energy and the environment. O'Gorman discusses the various strategies and approaches used by Republicans on energy policy and on addressing the issue of global climate change (GCC). He details how Republicans employed denial, attacking Obama, recusal, and suspending science to address energy and climate issues in 2014.

The editors contend that the virtue of a volume like this one in examining the 2014 election from multiple scholarly and methodological perspectives is that it would help us better understand this election in particular and midterm elections more generally. What is offered as a strength, however, can also be a weakness as the different perspectives and methods makes it somewhat uneven in presentation. Several chapters offer empirical analysis of the election while other chapters are descriptive in nature. Despite that, this volume would be a useful reader for an undergraduate course in electoral behavior.

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