The Academy of Political Science

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helping to lift the poor out of poverty by bringing in valued resources, the entrée of middle-class blacks results in the poor finding themselves shut off from resources and sometimes even priced out of their neighborhoods altogether, thereby reproducing inequalities. In *Black on the Block*, Pattillo convincingly demonstrates that mixed-income communities are *not* the answer to urban poverty.

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Electing America's Governors: The Politics of Executive Elections *by David L. Leal. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 256 pp. $69.95.*

Governors occupy a peculiar and precarious position in American politics, David Leal's comprehensive new book on gubernatorial elections demonstrates. They are embedded in the national party system, and are often punished in open-seat elections if they are from the same party as the president. Yet they have some freedom to shape the local meaning of party labels, or even to run strongly as minor-party or independent candidates. While governors of states large and small are often mentioned as possible presidential contenders, they are twice as likely to be defeated in reelection contests as U.S. senators.

For all of these reasons, Leal's explicitly comparative approach of studying governors and senators side by side is a welcome innovation. Few works on state or national politics collect data on both levels of government. Leal does so in this book, often conducting parallel analyses to discover what governors have in common with the senators who represent the same sets of constituents, and how their campaign dynamics differ.

The end product is a book that provides the most wide-ranging analysis of gubernatorial elections yet produced, and puts its findings in the context of races for other offices. The first part of the book explores the effects of campaign spending, economic performance, and candidate backgrounds on governors' vote shares and turnout in their elections. It is based on sophisticated (and, to the nonacademic audience, fairly complicated) models of a new dataset covering 185 gubernatorial contests held from 1980 to 1996.

One notable finding is that spending by sitting governors and challengers alike has about the same effect on vote shares. This stands in contrast to the pattern observed in U.S. House and Senate races, where money spent by incumbents is either less effective than challenger spending or completely ineffective. Another surprising discovery is that the success of gubernatorial challengers does not appear to depend much on their prior political background, in contrast to the important rule that "candidate quality" drives congressional races. The effects of economic and policy performance are also

surprising, sometimes to the point of straining credulity. When incumbents run, they may be buffeted by national economic forces, but can still perform well if they keep state crime rates low. In open-seat races, Leal finds that turnout rises if state unemployment is higher, but also if national income levels are higher. This is quite counterintuitive, and those who read these empirical chapters closely may question some of the specifications. But it is an important advance that other scholars can now challenge and seek to improve on these models, thanks to the data collection efforts of Leal and others.

The second part of the book studies governors and senators in tandem, revealing many clear distinctions. For instance, it is much harder to predict when a House member will jump into a governor's race, as opposed to a senate race. Gubernatorial contests are much more competitive than senate races, featuring more equitable spending by incumbents and challengers, as well as twice as many foiled reelections. Finally, serious challenges by minor-party and independent candidates are more than three times as frequent in governor's races.

In conclusion, Leal attributes these differences to the executive rather than the legislative nature of gubernatorial elections, arguing that they are in many ways most like presidential contests. This is quite possible, but he does not explore the other difference between governors and senators: One serves in a state party system, the other in national politics. It seems harder for the minority party to mount a serious U.S. Senate challenge in a state run by a strong majority party, because voters know that if they cross party lines, their senator will be forced to toe the party line in Washington DC. Governors will be less constrained by national party discipline, and thus freed to run as an "Alaskan Democrat," a "Hawaii Republican," or even a "Maine Independent." This freedom could account for both the competitiveness of gubernatorial elections and the prevalence of minor-party candidates. The point is debatable, but this is probably the sort of debate that Leal intended to generate with his intriguing book.

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The DeShaney Case: Child Abuse, Family Rights, and the Dilemma of State Intervention *by Lynne Curry. Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2007. 164 pp. Cloth, $29.95; paper, $15.95.*

This is a stunning analysis of a legal case that ultimately forced the Supreme Court to consider the question of whether the U.S. Constitution can protect children from abusive parents. This was the central issue when the mother of a severely damaged boy, Joshua, sued the Winnebago County Department of Social Services for failure to protect her son from the violent beatings of her estranged husband.