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The historical analysis presented in this book is multi-dimensional. The historical account examines the choices and personalities of individual presidents in the context of changing ideas, technology, and social forces. Through this approach, Genovese subtly challenges the idea that the presidency can be reduced to great men and great leadership, while simultaneously highlighting the role of decision making within the conditions that presidents inherit. Each chapter also examines currents of thought and scholarship about presidential power, which helps the reader engage with the book's central question about the proper scope and use of such power. This condensed intellectual history culminates with a very useful chart in chapter 5 that summarizes a range of perspectives on presidential power.

Two weaknesses detract from what is otherwise a very clear and insightful book. First, the historical treatment is a bit uneven. This can be very difficult to avoid, inasmuch as detached historical perspective on recent events often proves elusive. Nevertheless, there is a substantial change in focus as the book moves through history, with more attention to legal theory and less to political context in the later chapters. Similarly, the book could have incorporated the role of other actors in a more-systematic and uniform fashion. In the final chapters, Genovese considers possible changes in the roles of Congress, the courts, and the public. Parallel analysis of these institutions and actors during the time of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, or John McKinley (for example) would have made the book even more unique and insightful.

A Presidential Nation invites readers to consider presidential power at the intersection of Constitutional thought and practical politics. It raises questions about the institutional arrangements most conducive to democracy, and about leadership and power in the contemporary world. For students and scholars of the American presidency, it is a worthwhile and enlightening read.

JULIA R. AZARI
Marquette University

The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960–2010 by Crawford Young. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2012. 424 pp. Paper, $31.95.

To use one of Crawford Young's favorite words, his latest book, is "masterful." *The Postcolonial State in Africa: Fifty Years of Independence, 1960–2010* provides a rare retrospective on the first 50 years of African independence from one whose own distinguished career in teaching and learning African politics coincided completely with those years. The book's stated aim is to capture the unfolding dynamic of African politics across five decades. Young suggests

striking similarities in the trajectories of many African states between independence and the early 1990s, followed by "itineraries [that have] diverged sharply" since, resulting in a range of outcomes (p. 8). Overall, Young identifies three cycles in the first 50 years of independence, fluctuating between "high optimism, even euphoria, followed by disappointment, even a despairing 'Afropessimism,' in the first two and a mingling of hope, even audacious, and skeptical uncertainty in the current stage, reflecting sharply divergent itineraries" (p. 9). The cycles of hope and disappointment are elaborated in Part Two of the book in chapters on decolonization, independence, and the colonial legacy; the road to autocracy; state crisis; and democratization and its limits. Young is in his prime in his thematic chapter in Part Three on Africanism, nationalism, and ethnicity and the critical roles they have played in defining the political itineraries of African states. The book is refreshing in its steadfast treatment of the entire African continent, not just sub-Saharan Africa, as is usually the case in our discussions of "African" politics.

In my view, the book may be somewhat too pessimistic about the third cycle. This may be due to too great an emphasis on the conflicts of the 1990s, most of which had been resolved by the late 2000s. It is also important that we convey the findings of Young's colleague, Scott Straus, that Africa is not a place of "forever" wars, that "wars do end," and that, even taking into consideration the flare-up in conflicts after the democratic openings of the 1990s, conflicts have been of greater duration and frequency in places other than Africa. Young acknowledges this at the end of his chapter on the morphology of violent civil conflict, but still, an overemphasis on conflict seeps through. The book also fails to capture the many contributions that African women have made to ending conflicts, building peace, and participating in formal politics, especially over the last two decades. Young does bring in some of the seminal work of another colleague, Aili Mari Tripp, in acknowledging the roles of African women, but only toward the end of the book.

In his final chapter, Young treats in fleeting fashion some of the most-encouraging trends in Africa today. He mentions the role of African diasporas, but only in terms of remittances when what they are providing in today's globalized world is training and skills, capital and entrepreneurship, among other things. He mentions advances in technology, though mostly in terms of cell phones, when the Internet and social media are having huge impacts on things as diverse as agricultural production and election outcomes. And, of course, there is China, whose presence is clearly ambiguous, but momentous at the same time. There is also the passing of generations, as Young notes when he writes of the first generation of African leaders. Today, as in Ghana in 2012, presidents are being elected who were born after independence; similarly, students in universities across Africa today not only did not experience

colonialism, but also did not experience the first 30 years of single-party and military rule in Africa.

These are compelling and mostly hopeful developments, though challenges abound. *The Postcolonial State in Africa* brings us to this moment in Young's engaging style and erudite prose. The book shares Young's encyclopedic knowledge of African politics, providing in a single volume a comprehensive rendering of the first 50 years of independence. The book is sprinkled with anecdotes from his vast experience in Africa and that of his many students, and quotations from all of the relevant literature published over the past five decades. Students and scholars of African politics alike will benefit immensely from and enjoy reading *The Postcolonial State in Africa*.

GRETCHEN BAUER
University of Delaware

The Undeserving Rich: American Beliefs about Inequality, Opportunity, and Redistribution by Leslie McCall. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2013. 300 pp. Paper, $29.99.

Income inequality was a major issue in the 2012 presidential election. While the Occupy Wall Street movement may fade into history, the substantial media coverage it received drew national attention to the unequal distribution of income between the top 1 percent versus the bottom 99 percent of Americans after years of increasing inequality. This and the Republican nomination of Mitt Romney, the poster child for the top 1 percent (even before the videotape of him claiming that 47 percent of Barack Obama's base of support were people who paid no taxes and believed that the government should take care of them), enabled Obama to use inequality—and redistribution—as a major campaign issue. He used it along with an array of other domestic issues that divided the parties in an election in which the Democrats focused on mobilizing their ideological partisan base, abandoning a centrist campaign. In the context of existing public opinion and other research, the resonance of the income inequality issue was in fact surprising—a puzzle. Although completed and drawing on data well before the 2012 election, *The Undeserving Rich*—and with its title—provides an explanation.

Leslie McCall does this in a data-packed, complex, compelling, and careful analysis that shows what better data and new theorizing can provide. It reveals, in particular, how past research and thinking may have been time- or context-dependent, based on data from before the late 1980s. McCall reviews the tolerance, ambivalence, and ignorance perspectives that others have emphasized in explaining why the public has not viewed income inequality as a major issue in the