surrounding gun rights (Georgia and Montana); the impact of domestic violence homicides (Pennsylvania and West Virginia); and vertical policy diffusion (Alaska and Minnesota). The authors then provide quantitative analysis to predict the adoption of domestic violence firearm laws. Using data on domestic violence policy at the federal and state levels between 1990 and 2017, they find that the levels of gun homicides, Republican control of state legislature, citizen ideology, reelection years, and vertical pressure from federal policy influenced the adoption of domestic violence firearm laws. To assess variation in how domestic violence laws are adjudicated across states, the authors provide original surveys of public defenders and district attorneys across 16 states to analyze how domestic violence policies are prosecuted and defended in the courtroom. Finally, the authors discuss how domestic violence can create a barrier to women's political participation and how public health crises can exacerbate gender inequality when failing to take into consideration domestic violence.

This book makes as strong a contribution to policy as much as it does to the discipline of political science. Sidorsky and Schiller offer recommendations on how domestic violence law and policy implementation can be improved at the federal and state levels. The authors provide a necessary blueprint of how domestic violence laws are adopted and implemented, the inequality across and within states, and the political consequences of domestic violence and its policies. *Inequality across State Lines* is an important and essential book for scholars, policymakers, and politicians alike.

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Constitutional Polarization: A Critical Review of the U.S. Political System

Josep M. Colomer. New York, Routledge, 2023. 149 pp. $48.95.

Constitutional Polarization contains insightful thinking about the functioning of political institutions. It also offers a workable solution to our party system duopoly, acquaints party scholars with an ancient principle in the Catholic philosophy of government, and provokes thought about the effect of foreign wars on domestic politics.

American party politics are polarized, author Josep Colomer contends, because of the separation of the legislative and executive powers in the U.S. Constitution. He argues that its framers misunderstood British government. They sought to emulate "the balance of power" in Britain's constitution by separating the executive and legislative functions, but "[t]here was no 'mixed regime' or 'balance of powers'

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in Britain. The pendulum of power had swung to the lower chamber of Parliament" (23). The framers "wrongly inferred that the Monarch was still the chief executive" (24). In truth, the British Cabinet joined the executive and legislative powers in parliament.

The U.S. Constitution separated these powers by electing the president and Congress "by different rules and calendars," resulting in officials holding "incompatible offices" and relying "on different political supports" (26). "A frequent consequence . . . is divided government" (39). That gave rise to negative political minorities able to block decisions. "The system of electoral filters and negative checks often produces, rather than balances, legislative repose or inaction, also called paralysis, stalemate, deadlock, or gridlock" (45).

Although the framers did not plan it, "The Presidency became the focal point of the Union" (46). As predicted by game theory, the electoral rules for winning the presidency led to collective action by just two major parties that dramatically changed "the working of the system of separation of powers . . . . For the worse" (64). Organized within states, both parties were "localistic, weak, and internally divided" and selected "factional candidates" after "long disputes within each party." Moreover, "by not allowing political pluralism at the competitive level of bidding for office," our two party system "forced polarized presidential elections" (74).

Colomer sees little hope for changing our Constitutional design "in the current adversarial and polarized political scene," because "any major constitutional amendment, which would require congressional and territorial supermajorities, is unthinkable" (116). Most of his suggestions for electoral reform are familiar—holding open primaries, expanding top-two runoff elections, and allowing preferential voting—but one is essentially new, politically workable, and potentially revolutionary.

Colomer would repeal the 1967 law requiring House members to be elected in single-member districts. Already in 1967, nearly all members represented single-member districts, but northerners feared that southern states would impose statewide districts as a means to elect all-White congressional delegations. Historical evidence showed that was the common result of at-large elections of multimember districts using first-past-the-post rules.

Colomer would prevent that result by electing such congressional delegations with "rules to allocate seats to different candidacies and parties according to their proportions of votes. Gerrymandering would disappear, as each state would maintain the number of seats currently allocated based on its population" (117). While members of Congress would not pass legislation that required them to stand for re-election under such terms in their own states, they might pass enabling legislation that allowed other states to try. That makes his proposal workable. In practice, it could be revolutionary. It could produce meaningful multiparty representation in the House.

The last five pages of Colomer's book turn toward the "new shift in power in favor of the government in Washington" (124). They introduce the medieval principle of subsidiarity, which derives from the Latin word *subsidium*, meaning help or support. Usually credited to St. Thomas Aquinas, subsidiarity holds that a community of families or a group of villages should work together for their common good. Some scholars view subsidiarity as governmental self-sufficiency, akin to decentralization and libertarianism.

Colomer views subsidiarity more broadly: "The basic idea is that whatever a low-level government can handle should be left to the local government; what

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the state can handle should be under state jurisdiction; the federal government should have jurisdiction only over those issues that lower-level authorities cannot handle well" (124). His assertion seems eminently sensible but unrelated to a critical review of the U.S. political system.

Nevertheless, some students of American politics will benefit from learning about the subsidiarity principle, as I have. (Those who study international relations may already know it was incorporated into the 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European Union.) The concept is drawing increased attention in the literature on American federalism.

Finally, there is the theme that runs throughout Colomer's book: domestic politics are less polarized under the threat of war. "Imperial cohesion and national unity, usually difficult to attain in such a large and diverse country, increase when it faces a foreign existentia1 threat, as happened during World War II and the Cold War with the Soviet Union" (3). This is different from the old saying "politics stops at the water's edge," which only suggests bipartisanship in foreign policy. Colomer implies that war also increases bipartisanship in domestic policy. He cites the "general sociological law that when a human group perceives an external existential threat, it increases its internal cohesion" (17).

Colomer juxtaposes the danger of nuclear war in the late 1970s and early 1980s with President Reagan's 1981 claim that "[g]overnment is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem" and curiously suggests that "citizens were urged not to engage in domestic politics" (98). Perhaps domestic politics are less polarized under threat of war, but Colomer's other remedy—proportional representation in statewide elections of House representatives—is far more attractive and worth trying.

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The Governance Cycle in Parliamentary Democracies: A Computational Social Science Approach

Scott de Marchi and Michael Laver. Cambridge University Press, 2023. 209 pp. $34.99.

Many great advances in social science would not have been possible without combining substantive inquiries with methodological advancements. This encouraging approach continues with the publication of de Marchi and Laver's book. In their

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