

than serendipitous, as demonstrated in the case of Argentina. Additionally, in some cases, such as Mexico, there seemed to be suggestive discoveries—that is, evidence that incriminates politicians—but no zealous prosecutors drove the anticorruption crusade.

The “moment of agency” is key to understanding the rise and fall of anticorruption crusades. Prosecutorial agency has two pillars: a zealous prosecutorial strategy and the creation of task forces. Because prosecuting grand corruption using conventional legal methods proves to be challenging, zealous prosecutors use unorthodox strategies to investigate and litigate corruption crimes. In fact, prosecutors thus need to put in motion creative interpretations of legislation. This includes conceptualizing and framing the crime in such a way as to secure extended periods of pretrial detention, which is sometimes in tension with due process. Zealous prosecutors also use innovative legal tactics like plea bargains, and they cultivate relationships with banks and other international entities to facilitate information sharing. Additionally, they must devise a strategy to effectively communicate the significance of their cases to the public, thereby ultimately enhancing the survival of the crusade. They also obtain information on the defendants and strategically leak it to journalists to produce a snowball effect. Zealous prosecutors are strongly committed and persistent.

The second pillar of the moment of agency is key to the successful implementation of anticorruption crusades: the operation of specialized units or task forces. When a team of prosecutors is assigned to the same case over an extended period of time, it is able to develop specialized toolkits for prosecuting challenging cases like political corruption. Prosecutors in these specialized units do not get sidetracked by routine criminal cases; instead, they focus on unraveling the intricate paths of corruption and have the necessary time to meticulously “follow the money.”

The third pillar, the “moment of backlash,” is the most innovative part of this book’s contribution to the literature on judicial politics. It offers insights into the repercussions of prosecutorial and judicial activism on the legitimacy and, in some cases, the political independence of both courts and public prosecutors’ offices. When facing prosecution, politicians often wield all their power to erode public trust in the courts, judges, prosecutors, and the legitimacy of anticorruption cases. They accuse judges and prosecutors of “lawfare” and the use of justice as a political weapon to destabilize politics, sometimes even democracy. Both scholars and practitioners must pay close attention to these processes of delegitimizing courts and prosecutorial offices in the context of cleansing politics of corruption, because they tend to erode democracy.

The last part of the book deals with Lava Jato’s unexpected consequences on the public and on the political system. How do voters come to understand anticorruption

crusades? Despite the criminalization of important cases of political corruption, why do some citizens not fully support the prosecution of this type of crime? Citizens’ reactions to political corruption scandals and prosecutions are not uniform. Optimists tend to focus on the result—justice is being done—whereas pessimists believe that politics will be always an unredeemed and repulsive business. The authors claim that the optimistic view leads to political reengagement, while the pessimistic view drives citizens to political cynicism. Using mixed methods—conjoint survey experiments and focus groups—to evaluate citizen opinions on the criminalization of grand corruption, the authors find varied results. In Brazil, citizens tend to be divided along partisan lines regarding Lava Jato’s outcomes. Supporters of the Workers’ Party (WP) describe the efforts to criminalize corruption as lawfare, whereas non-WP voters are generally content with the judicial outcomes. In Peru, citizens, regardless of their partisan preferences, hold very critical and negative views about the prosecutorial toolkit and discretionary measures, such as plea bargains.

Future research should take seriously the paradox highlighted by the book: the adverse impact of anticorruption crusades on public opinion and their role in destabilizing politics. Public frustration with anticorruption crusades cannot be overlooked, because it often fuels tendencies toward populist authoritarian choices. However, the zealous prosecution of corruption remains necessary to instill hope in a democracy that upholds the rule of law and prevents political impunity.

The book makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the conditions under which the prosecution of political corruption succeeds, particularly in countries with young democracies. Additionally, it reveals the various and unexpected effects that prosecuting corruption has on voters’ attitudes and, consequently, on the stability of democracy.

**Gender and Violence against Political Actors.** Edited by Elin Bjarnegård and Pär Zetterberg. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2023. 297p. \$115.50 cloth, \$39.95 paper.  
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*Gender and Violence against Political Actors* is an ambitious and much needed contribution to the study of violence, politics, and gender. The editors bring disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological diversity to a scholarly exploration of how “gender dynamics are manifested in violent acts against political actors” (241). Drawing especially on scholarship from peace and conflict studies, political science, and feminist studies, the book seeks to move beyond

the scholarly silos that have led to a fragmentation of gendered research on political violence.

The structure of the book reflects this attempt to bridge disciplinary differences. The introduction, written by the editors, provides the conceptual framework to the three key concepts explored in the book: politics, violence, and gender. It is followed by four chapters emphasizing the different disciplinary and theoretical approaches used to study gendered violence against political actors (part I, “Theoretical Approaches”). Then, the book expands the concept of violence (part II, “The Continuum of Violence”) with four chapters that each provide a detailed analysis of one type of violence: physical, psychological, sexual, and online. This is followed by six chapters exploring gendered political violence in different contexts (part III, “Case Studies”). The book concludes with five chapters focusing on the policy implications of gendered studies of political violence and one final chapter written by the coeditors proposing a way forward in the study of gender and political violence (part IV, “Policy Responses”).

The editors do a laudable job in developing an introductory framework and reinforcing the commonalities in approaches in the conclusion (chapter 21). Key contributions come from the development of what they call the “psychological-physical continuum of violence” and the robust discussion surrounding online violence throughout the book. The recognition of violence occurring along a continuum helps connect the conflict literature that often emphasizes physical violence to the burgeoning literature on violence against women in politics (VAWIP) while also providing the conceptual delineation of how the book approaches violence against political actors. It is important to note that economic violence is not part of this continuum, because the coeditors argue that it pertains to structural issues and not necessarily to intentional acts that “violate the personal integrity of the political actors” (8).

The book frames politics narrowly and in relation to the victim of violence and reinforces the importance of gender as a key concept and analytical category. In part I, contributors apply this framing to contextualize gender and political violence in peace and conflict research (chapter 2), VAWIP (chapter 3), and conflict-related sexual violence against men (chapter 4). Chapter 5, the last chapter in part I, provides an overview of the approaches discussed in the previous chapters and expands on an approach emphasizing the violent act, asking, “How is an act of political violence gendered?” (p. 46). This chapter introduces the act-based approach to understanding politics, violence, and gender while attempting to bridge the theoretical differences in the previous three chapters. Together, these four chapters establish the conceptual guardrails for the chapters to come.

In part II, the contributors provide theoretical, methodological, and empirical considerations for each of the

types of violences enumerated in the continuum described in the introduction: physical, psychological, sexual, and online. Chapter 6, on physical violence, relies on quantitative event-based data to expand on the concept. Chapter 7, on psychological violence, emphasizes the importance of interview data and case studies to complement quantitative data. Chapter 8, on sexual violence, discusses the promise and limitations of current quantitative (coded) data on sexual violence, as well as the potential and limitations of qualitative (fieldwork) data. Chapter 9, on online violence, enumerates established methods and approaches to understand the phenomenon, highlighting quantitative (sentiment analysis and social network analysis) and qualitative (critical discourse studies) methods. Taken together, these four chapters provide a glimpse at the wide array of methodological approaches to understanding the continuum of gendered violence, highlighting some of the most recent developments in the study of such phenomena.

The case studies introduced in part III combine the theoretical foundations from part I and the methodological discussions in part II to provide brief empirical analyses of gendered political violence in different political contexts. Chapter 10 focuses on electoral violence targeting voters in Papua New Guinea, where authors remind us that “violence does not occur in a vacuum; it is heavily influenced by context, histories of conflict, and underlying power dynamics” (110). Chapter 11 discusses election violence in Uganda, highlighting that “while women in Uganda report a wide range of experiences with violence during elections, they demonstrated resolve in exercising their political rights” (130). Chapter 12 focuses on harassment of parliamentary candidates in the United Kingdom, where women candidates “pay a larger cost than men for expressing distinctive political views, especially when these views do not correspond to what is socially expected from them” (147). Chapter 13 shows how gender and race influence the US local and state context, where “women mayors are more likely to experience violence” (158) and women of color state senators experience higher rates of violence while men of color experience violence at similar levels to white women (159). Chapter 14 explores violence against local-level Swedish politicians, suggesting that it has increased over time and that women mayors are targeted far more than any other officeholders (173). Chapter 15 develops an intersectional approach to the study of online violence against women in politics in Israel, suggesting that “online violence differs in form and impact across actors and geographic contexts” (187). Although all the case studies provide important contributions, the emphasis on elections and violence against candidates and elected political actors prioritizes the focus on the comparative politics literature, leaving little room for direct analyses of political violence in conflict and post-conflict settings.

The book concludes with a discussion on policy responses, highlighting global and country-level efforts to curb violence against women in politics and sexual harassment (chapters 16, 19, and 20), policy responses to political violence online (chapter 17), and responses to conflict-related sexual violence (chapter 18). All the chapters provide examples of attempts to curb gendered political violence, highlighting positive results and areas for improvement. The book concludes with a call to continue the dialogue between the different fields of research and practice (247), emphasizing the importance of intersectional analyses.

This book is an essential read for anyone conducting research or developing policies related to gender and political violence. The complexity of the three main concepts (politics, violence, and gender), combined with disciplinary differences on how to approach them, means that some chapters do not fully fit into the theoretical and conceptual delimitations proposed by the editors. Yet, this book contributes greatly to the study of gender and political violence and provides a good model for cross-disciplinary conversations of complex concepts.

**Bank Politics: Structural Reform in Comparative Perspective.** By David Howarth and Scott James. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. 384p. \$135.00 cloth.  
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In the wake of the global financial crisis (GFC), a significant number of countries saw their financial systems, markets, and regulatory frameworks changed forever. In this important book, *Bank Politics: Structural Reform in Comparative Perspective*, David Howarth and Scott James uncover why seemingly similar countries varied in their response to the GFC when enacting banking reforms. This book is very much in the tradition of explaining the political drivers of economic reforms to help the reader understand why and how countries diverge in their economic policies. A key contribution is its focus on a relatively understudied but important topic in modern economies—that is, banking reforms, defined as structural separation or “ringfencing” of practices and entities (6). It puts forward a novel explanation for why some authorities pushed through tougher (i.e., stronger) structural separation after the GFC than others did. The cases considered are the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the EU.

The authors take an interest group, preference-based approach to understanding why and when authorities undertake structural bank reforms. *Bank Politics* makes two important claims, both of which contribute to the existing literature. First, the authors start with the idea that

actors in the financial sector have interests and preferences and that these interests and preferences vary. This interest heterogeneity can either get in the way of or benefit lobbying efforts for a policy. Consequently, the unity of the sector not only has consequences for collective action (i.e., how members come together) but also for the clarity of their collective ambitions when they lobby regulators and policy makers. The authors classify a country’s financial sector into two types: those with “competitive financial power” in which the sector is divided and those with “cooperative financial power” where the sector is more unified.

Second, the authors consider the role that delegation plays in bank reforms. They argue that, by strategically locating the venue for debate, politicians can use delegation to make it either harder or easier to reach policy agreement on banking reforms. Delegating to smaller and more technical groups, they argue, makes for easier conflict resolution, and bank reforms are hence more likely to succeed. By contrast, larger and more heterogeneous groups make for more difficult resolution, and bank reforms are therefore more likely to fail. From these two variables—*financial power* and *delegation*—the authors create a 2 x 2 typology of bank structural reform with four types: *Durable Reform*, *No Reform*, *Contested Reform*, and *Symbolic Reform*. The case studies are placed into these types for theory-testing purposes. For example, using process tracing, they illustrate why the United Kingdom adopted new rules relatively easily, whereas in Germany, France, and the Netherlands, tough reforms failed to materialize.

The authors’ starting point—the heterogeneity of the financial sector and its demands—is particularly refreshing. This is because the banking industry is often assumed to be homogeneous and conservative, but as the authors show, it is sometimes neither. Furthermore, the fact that the financial system changed rapidly throughout the financial crisis and that uncertainty was extremely high made it hard for the financial sector to come together with “one voice.” Alternatively, as the authors show, high political salience, especially in the United States, was not enough to push through serious banking reforms. Indeed, the authors show multiple instances when the financial sector was able to thwart tough reforms despite high uncertainty or when politics and politicians got in the way of regulations that would, if enacted, be in the public interest.

The authors test their theory of bank reforms using case studies and interviews. They find a wealth of results, too numerous to chronicle here, so I only outline a few as a teaser. Surprisingly they show how countries such as the Netherlands and Germany were only able to adopt *Symbolic Reforms* because of political blockages. Alternatively, they find that the United Kingdom was able to adopt *Durable Reforms* because politicians and senior regulators were willing and able to limit the influence of the UK