own children, one nurse whom Saeidi interviewed saved patients whom she regarded as her "children," highlighting her identity not only as a mother but also as a carer of victims of the war and savior of the republic.

Chapter 4 also allows the reader to delve into prison memoirs, particularly those of political prisoners who were deliberately separated and isolated by the regime. Leftist Iranians were accused of being collaborators with Iraq's Baath Party because they opposed the establishment of an Islamic Republic. As a result, many were imprisoned together with Iraqis who were accused of espionage. During their imprisonment both Iranian and Iraqi women formed deeper connections and friendships that disrupted the regime's attempt to divide them as enemies. These emotional bonds were often formed through shared experiences of womanhood, such as losing a husband and becoming a widow, or through motherhood, as some children became orphans after losing their fathers.

In conclusion, *Women and the Islamic Republic* makes a significant contribution to the fields of political science, Iranian studies, gender studies, and anthropology and is an essential read for students and scholars in these fields. With her interdisciplinary approach, Saeidi sheds new light on the complex relationship between women, citizenship, and the Iranian state before and after the Islamic Revolution. Within the context of ongoing civil protests in Iran that are predominantly run and led by young Iranian women, Saeidi once again illustrates the transformative role women can play in authoritarian political contexts.

Resisting Backsliding: Opposition Strategies against the Erosion of Democracy. By Laura Gamboa. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 320p. $105.00 cloth, $34.99 paper.
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Academic journals and popular media are peppered with analysis and commentary on democratic erosion or backsliding. Why is it happening? Where is it happening? Is it even really happening? In analyzing the phenomenon and attempting to answer these questions, most scholarship has tended to focus either on structural forces that create inhospitable territory for democracy or on the actions of would-be autocrats who get elected and proceed to dismantle democracy from within. Laura Gamboa's *Resisting Backsliding: Opposition Strategies against the Erosion of Democracy* offers a valuable addition to this literature by shining light on the agency of the political opposition and how their strategic choices affect whether would-be autocrats succeed in their antidemocratic designs.

The book lays out a theoretical framework for analyzing democratic backsliding that divides the process into two sequential stages. First, backsliding requires the election of a chief executive with hegemonic aspirations. Examining the Latin American region since the 1980s, the book examines why these would-be autocrats get elected in some cases but not others, pointing toward causes such as party system instability, poor economic conditions, and state dysfunction. These findings largely reinforce existing claims in the literature. Nevertheless, this careful analysis serves an important confirmatory function while also setting up one of the book's main underlying claims: structural factors best explain the election of would-be autocrats, but agency and choice must be highlighted to understand what happens after they take office.

Gamboa's insight is that the strategies embraced by the political opposition merit particular attention because they affect the opposition's domestic and international legitimacy and shift the incentives and constraints faced by would-be autocrats. Two dimensions of opposition strategy are highlighted: (1) whether they operate within institutional channels (such as competing in elections or using the legislative arena to slow the autocrat's agenda) or extra-institutional channels (coups, strikes, protests) and (2) whether such strategies have moderate (win a tactical victory) or radical (get the autocrat out immediately) goals. The main claim of the book is that radical, extra-institutional strategies such as coups, general strikes, and violent protests are particularly pernicious gambles for the opposition. If these strategies fail (and they often do), they delegitimize the opposition domestically and internationally. Equally troubling, autocrats often capitalize on the aftermath of these failed gambits by escalating repression and accelerating erosion. To empirically assess these claims, Gamboa conducts case studies of Venezuela and Colombia, supported by briefer comparison cases of Bolivia, Poland, Turkey, and Hungary.

The main case studies make compelling claims for centering the importance of opposition strategies in our analysis of the dynamics of erosion. The Colombian case highlights the synergies between strong judicial institutions and a restrained opposition. Álvaro Uribe came to power facing a weak opposition and launched repeated barrages on the Colombian constitution, attempting to expand and entrench his power. Ultimately, however, Uribe proved incapable of bending the country's highest court to his will: his efforts to remove presidential term limits failed, and he was forced to leave office after serving two terms and eight years. Gamboa's contribution to the analysis of this story is to explore how the relatively restrained choices of the opposition—which opposed Uribe only via moderate, institutional strategies—created a context in which the high court could hold the line. The opposition's choices ensured that Colombian politics was not wracked by the kind of deep crisis and polarization that might have enabled Uribe to move against the court via more dubious means. By safeguarding their legitimacy, the opposition also enabled the court to tacitly align with their cause more easily. Although the opposition was weak, their

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choice of moderate, institutional strategies proved vital to preserving Colombian democracy.

The Venezuelan case provides an intriguing counterpoint. In the aftermath of Hugo Chávez's aggressive and polarizing first few years in office, the opposition resorted to radical, extra-institutional strategies, including a coup attempt in April 2002, a general strike launched in December 2002, and a boycott of the 2005 legislative elections. Gamboa convincingly shows that these strategies badly hurt the opposition once they failed, delegitimizing them as a prodemocratic force and giving Chávez opportunities to tighten his grip on key institutions, most importantly the state-owned oil company PDVSA. Gamboa draws this logic out at length, skillfully navigating a complex case and drawing on both interviews with some key opposition figures and other illuminating sources like a database of legislative bills, which help demonstrate the consequences of the opposition's ill-fated decision to boycott the 2005 legislative elections.

Although Gamboa's book makes a strong argument for why and how opposition strategy choice affects the likelihood of democratic erosion, the size of this effect is not quite as clear. Is opposition strategy choice a variable that matters around the margins, increasing or decreasing the likelihood of democratic erosion by a substantively important but nevertheless limited degree, or is it a more decisive variable that outweighs other factors, such that flipping strategy choice alone would be highly likely to lead to different outcomes in a counterfactual universe? At times the book seems to claim the latter, but some of the evidence seems more in line with the former. The Venezuelan case provides a useful illustration. Had the Venezuelan opposition embraced moderate, institutional strategies like their Colombian counterparts, would they have been able to prevent the erosion of democracy? Under the new constitution, Chávez was not term limited until 2012, and attempts to overturn term limits were to be decided by the Constitutional Chamber of a Supreme Court that Chávez had packed with a loyalist majority in 1999. Because waiting out Chávez was never an option, the opposition had to beat him. Yet he was an electoral behemoth in the years when democratic erosion occurred: he was on the ballot four times between 1998 and 2006 (including the referendum on his recall) and won those elections by 16, 22, 19, and 26 percentage points. One of Gamboa's interviewees, the famous politician and intellectual Teodoro Petkoff, suggests that the opposition would have beaten Chávez in 2006 had they only avoided strategic missteps in the years beforehand. That is a hard argument to sustain when you lost 63–37. Although the Venezuelan case provides a vivid example of how opposition strategy choices can backfire and empower incumbents, it may also be an example of a case in which the opposition was doomed no matter what strategies they selected.

Even though these questions about effect size provide food for thought, Gamboa's contribution to the literature on democratic erosion does not hinge on their answers. The book is a welcome corrective to a literature that is otherwise very focused on the actions and activities of would-be autocrats in office. Its typology of strategy choices provides a parsimonious but compelling way to think about the menu of strategic options available to opposition forces. And the mechanisms underlying the theory help us think more systematically about the strategic interactions between incumbents and the opposition, as they figure out how to react to each other's moves on the fly while playing a game with an unreliable rule book. In sum, this book stakes out an important piece of territory in the theoretical landscape and deserves attention from all scholars interested in the dynamics of democratic erosion and survival.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Beyond the Wire: US Military Deployments and Host Country Public Opinion. By Michael A. Allen, Michael E. Flynn, Carla Martinez Machain, and Andrew Stravers. New York: Oxford University Press, 2022. 272p. $99.00 cloth, $29.95 paper.

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Although the American foreign basing network is a central aspect of international security politics, there is a lot we do not know about it. Michael A. Allen, Michael E. Flynn, Carla Martinez Machain, and Andrew Stravers have written an important contribution to increasing our understanding of the dynamics of US foreign military presences. Through a survey of more than 42,000 individuals in 14 states that host US military bases, the authors generated a significant dataset for thinking about the relationship between US military bases and the societies in which they are embedded. Such a comprehensive effort to collect cross-national data is a real step forward in comprehending the drivers of base politics at an individual level. Allen and coauthors rightly frame their contribution as filling a significant gap in how we think about base dynamics. Instead of a macro-level analysis, they are interested in understanding the microfoundations of US hegemony; that is, the interactions at the level of individuals that account for the ability of the United States to station troops in hundreds of bases all over the world. Previous work mostly focused on elite politics and the bargains underpinning basing relationships, or if quantitative, they

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