remains to be done, the *Bostock* precedent will inevitably inform how judges approach these and other issues moving forward. That being said, rights-based and court-focused strategies are often long plays, as Pierceson's analysis makes clear, and it is imperative that activists and allies focus their efforts on a broad array of locations of injustice and across institutions, to include the courts, to facilitate transformative change and advance LGBTQ interests and rights in the here and now. This is especially true in light of the backlash against trans rights that followed the *Bostock* decision as a number of states and locales passed transphobic legislation, and as violence against trans individuals increases each year.

In closing, Pierceson covers a lot of legal ground in *Before Bostock,* and individuals interested in the evolution of Title VII in the context of sex discrimination will enjoy his attention to the details of the many lower court, EEOC, and Supreme Court cases. For a book that focuses a great deal of attention on the nuances of judicial decision making, Pierceson avoids legal jargon in favor of a writing style that is accessible to a broad audience, to include undergraduate and graduate students. As a law and courts scholar who was surprised by the Court's *Bostock* decision, *Before Bostock* enhanced my own understanding of how and why the majority reached its decision, and I think that others will similarly benefit from Pierceson's research.

The Cost of Doing Politics: How Partisanship and Public Opinion Shape Corporate Influence.

By Jane L. Sumner. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 241p. $99.99 cloth.
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— John G. Matsusaka, *University of Southern California*
matsusak@usc.edu

Government policies—regulations, taxes, subsidies—can make or break a corporation, so it's no surprise that businesses devote considerable resources to influencing political decisions. Business groups differ from other interest groups, however, in that influencing government is a sideshow to their primary purpose of selling products. Consequently, they must keep an eye on how their political activities are viewed by customers, investors, employees, and other stakeholders. Surprisingly, there is little research on how these considerations constrain corporate political activities, a gap this book by Jane L. Sumner begins to fill.

One of the book's contributions is simply to call attention to the ways that consumer opinion constrains corporate involvement in politics, with a particular emphasis on boycotts (chap. 3). I would frame things even more broadly, recognizing that businesses are concerned not only with how consumers view their political activities but also how they play with investors, especially socially responsible investment funds; employees, who may avoid working for companies that don't reflect their values; and politicians, who may retaliate against companies that oppose their positions (as Disney learned recently when it ran afoul of the Republican-controlled government in Florida over a law on classroom education).

In addition to framing the general issue, the book lays down an initial empirical case for the importance of these constraints on corporate behavior. Chapter 4, which investigates how ordinary people respond to corporate political activities, is particularly interesting. Some believe that the public has a distaste for corporate political activity. Results reported from a vignette survey experiment suggest that things are more nuanced—voters dislike political spending *that supports causes they dislike.* If generalizable, this finding argues against simplistic interpretations of public opinion surveys on corporate spending. It also offers lessons for managers of corporations: If a company's stakeholders are primarily of one ideological orientation, political activity may build goodwill.

The follow-up question is: If the public dislikes a company's political activity, does this affect the company's bottom line? Chapter 5 addresses this with a novel textual analysis of reports that each publicly traded corporation files annually with the Securities Exchange Commission. A keyword search from the risk analysis section of annual reports finds that 3.1% mentioned "boycotts" as a risk and 1.0% mentioned boycotts together with "social media." On the face of it, most companies do not seem worried about boycotts instigated through social media, but there are some companies that feel exposed, especially those engaged directly with consumers. The chapter shows that large companies were more likely to mention boycotts as a risk than small companies. This is probably because big companies are more in the public eye, their actions are more likely to be noticed, and activists are more likely to view attacking them as a way to gain attention. The chapter argues at length that the companies that are worried about boycotts are not concerned because of potential lost revenue but because of damage to their brand, but this distinction seems artificial because a brand has value only to the extent that it generates net revenue. Although the evidence does not show that most companies are worried about social media backlash or that boycotts materially harm their bottom lines, it does offer hints that the issue may be percolating, and that more research would be valuable.

Chapter 6 closes the circle by exploring whether the risk of consumer boycotts causes companies to alter their political activities. The primary evidence here comes from lobbying and campaign contribution data. Sumner observes that most companies do not lobby directly but rather rely on trade organizations to make their case. She suggests they do that to veil their political activities, which is plausible, but not demonstrated empirically. The author also notes that few companies make campaign contributions. These basic facts are important for putting corporate

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spending in context but are not new to the literature. The chapter also shows that direct lobbying and campaign contributions are more common among large than small corporations, which seems to run against the previous evidence that large companies feel more at risk of boycotts. The likely explanation is simply that large companies have greater resources available. The chapter also includes a qualitative discussion of what drives corporate political activities based on interviews. The anecdotes are intriguing, but the refusal of most companies to participate in interviews limits the analysis to describing the views of lobbyists and journalists.

The book has a running thread on the hypothesis that companies with women as their top executives are more likely to be targeted by activists, and therefore more likely to avoid political activity. It argues that female CEOs—because of their rarity—might attract more attention and more boycotts. Unfortunately, the rarity of female CEOs essentially precludes studying them—all the estimates with female indicators are statistically insignificant—and it is hard to share the book's conclusion that gender is an important factor driving boycotts and corporate political activity.

Overall, the book brings to bear a dazzling variety of research methods—surveys, textual analysis, spending and lobbying data, interviews—and ranges widely over a broad set of issues related to public opinion and corporate political activity. The disparate and somewhat indirect nature of the evidence does not lend itself to producing airtight findings, and I suspect the ultimate value of the book will not be seen as its individual statistical tests but rather in calling attention to the issue and framing the links in the chain that need to be studied. Its central message, not widely appreciated, is that although corporations have by far the deepest pockets to influence politics, they are also the most constrained because of potential backlash from market participants. More remains to be done, but the book provides a road map for future research, especially evidence on three key questions: How do corporate stakeholders (consumers, investors, workers) react to corporate political spending? What effect does this have on corporate value? And the biggest question—how does this affect the political behavior of corporations and democracy overall?

Presidential Control over Administration: A New Historical Analysis of Public Finance Policymaking, 1929–2018. By Patrick R. O'Brien. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2022. 344p. $44.95 cloth.
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— John T. Woolley, *University of California, Santa Barbara*
woolley@ucsb.edu

This book reflects a hugely ambitious research project. It should be of interest not only to students of the presidency and economic policy but also generally to students of public policy. The project is notable for its extended historical reach.

Patrick O'Brien's central argument is that "presidential control over administration is a foundational component of policymaking and operates as a historical variable" (p. 5). For presidents to bring about large and enduring shifts in policy, they need to control the administrative apparatus. The degree of control varies across time and across policy areas—control is a "historical variable."

In developing this argument, O'Brien basically combines two very different analyses in one book. The first part (chaps. 1–3) ties the work into contemporary presidential scholarship arguing that many scholars assume a degree of executive control of administration that is doubtful, at best. This first part also has a quantitative analysis intended to demonstrate systematically the connection between problem severity and salience and the degree of administrative control. O'Brien hypothesizes sequences of degrees of presidential control beginning with *innovation* and then shifting to *stabilization*, *constraint*, and *collapse*. Following collapse, a new sequence begins. In the period studied, 1929–2018, O'Brien identifies two complete cycles, the first is the "Roosevelt era" and the second is the "Reagan era."

The first part is dense, and the quantitative analysis in chapter 3 may fail to persuade. There are many instances when measurements, definition of categories, and estimations are problematical. A key graph (Figure 3.5, p. 56) suggests that the New Deal control sequence moved from modest to *greater* presidential control, but the Reagan era moved from modest control to *lower* control. In both eras, problem severity and salience both seem to have changed from high to low. At points, O'Brien seems to anticipate objections about variable selection and interpretation—his comments in this respect are useful.

The second part, chapters 4 to 14, is the bulk of the book. This part is much more satisfying because it is a sustained historical narrative that is complex and nuanced. The historical account will be mostly familiar to students of economic policy. O'Brien reviews presidential policy dilemmas (often involving unhappy economic surprises) and frequent tensions with other policy makers. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson are essentially skipped; Nixon and Ford get a light touch.

Some topics not central to the first part are more squarely raised in the second. For example, the role of Congress in public finance policy is more explicit, as is the importance of the president's partisan support in Congress. While the quantitative analysis of the first part coded Federal Reserve (Fed) independence as a constant, in the second part there is considerable attention to shifting presidential relations with the Fed. In the first part "the problem" is restricted to inflation plus unemployment. But in the second part, other economic conditions enter the account.

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