

Introduction: Volume 19 No. 2

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For the summer volume of The Forum we present a diverse set of papers.

Important questions about the 2016 election remain. **Christopher J. Devine** and **Kyle C. Kopko** address a question that has endured since 2016: Did the presence of third-party candidates draw sufficient votes to cost Hillary Clinton the presidency? Another question that has persisted since 2016 is how much did previously less engaged voters turnout in that election and affect the outcome. **Vladimir E. Medencia** and **Matthew Fowler** assess this issue. A growing issue in politics is the role of Super PACs. How do they allocate their funds during campaigns? **Michael S. Rocca** and **Jared W. Clay** examine how these PACs spent their money in 2012–2018 campaigns.

For some time, the argument has been made that conservatives are more united than liberals, since the latter are presumed to rely on identity politics which fragments them. **Willie Gin** examines the data and comes to a different conclusion. The policy stances of Democrats and liberals has been of great interest in recent decades, with some arguing that Democrats have retreated from redistributive policy concerns as conservatives have surged. **Amelia Malpas** and **Adam Hilton** examine Democratic Party platforms over time and suggest it has been more complex than just decline over time.

Finally, **Jonathan Bendor** and **John G. Bullock** address the issue of the competency of public officials and the impact on policy. They use the response of the Trump administration to Covid-19 to illustrate how attitudes towards competence and expertise within an administration affect the ability of government to respond effectively.

Deborah J. Schildkraut reviews *Race to the Bottom: How Racial Appeals Work in American Politics*, by LaFleur Stephens-Dougan, who examines the role of race issues in campaigns. **Daniel DiSalvo** then reviews Rachel M. Blum's *How the Tea Party Captured the GOP*, an analysis of the rise of influence of the Tea Party.