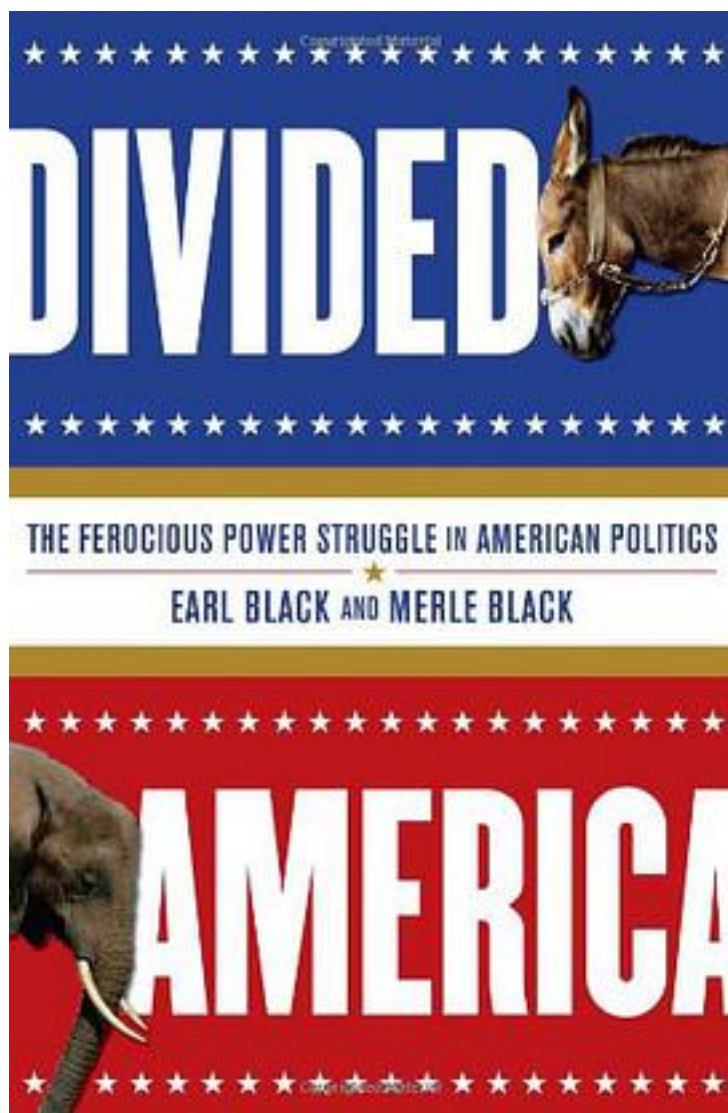


Divided America



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著者:Earl Black

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"Divided America" tells the biggest story in American politics today. It's the story behind the emergence of a ferocious power struggle between conservative Republicans and liberal Democrats that is tearing the country's politics apart. Drawing on extensive polling data and close analyses of presidential, senatorial, and congressional elections over the past fifty years, two eminent political scientists show, for the first time, how partisan warfare has reduced both major parties to minority status and locked them into fierce power struggles in each election cycle, thereby making America less stable and more difficult to govern. Because the two major parties are now evenly balanced in the national electorate, control of the White House and Congress can shift dramatically with each election. Neither Republicans nor Democrats operate with any "lock" on the presidency, House of Representatives, or Senate, as demonstrated by the 2006 congressional elections. Earl Black and Merle Black examine the party battles as they've played themselves out in the nation's five principal geographic areas. Each party has developed two important regional strongholds, as exemplified in the 2004 elections, when Republicans won all the electoral votes and sizable majorities of House and Senate seats in the South and Mountain/Plains states while the Democrats won almost all the electoral votes and large majorities in the Northeast and the Pacific Rim states. The Midwest is the perennial swing region. The authors describe the enormous changes that have occurred in the electorates of each region over the past fifty years -- with emphasis on how the size and partisan affiliations of key groups have changed -- and show how these transformations have generated today's unstable two-party battles. Although the relentlessly competitive nature of modern American politics is generally appreciated, the regional causes underlying this new state of affairs are not well understood. Because neither Democrats nor Republicans can produce national majorities simply by sweeping their regional strongholds, they are locked in a fierce power struggle in each election. "Divided America" tells the story of these remarkable developments in clear, vigorous prose and provides a pragmatic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each party. For the foreseeable future, each party will be within striking distance of winning -- or losing -- political power in every national institution. Understanding the party battles in America's regions is vital to understanding how today's losers can become tomorrow's winners

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