

Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America by Paul Frymer. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1999. 214 pp. Cloth, \$45.00; paper, \$16.95.

The vast literature on American political parties has been immensely enriched and enhanced by this pioneering work on race and parties. Articles, monographs, and textbooks rarely, if ever, explore how the race variable influences and impacts party politics and policies and demonstrate the consequences of this influence and impact for the needs of African-American partisans and their community. Paul Frymer's new book breaks with this sad and pitiable scholarly tradition on parties, which have maintained this tradition of silence and omission for nearly a century. There are few exceptions.

Frymer begins his book with a summary of the ideas of several party scholars in a single coherent theoretical statement about party competition. This theory of party competition posits that "competition between two parties forces at least one party to reach out to those groups not represented by the other party. As a result of this competition, parties will mobilize these groups to participate in electoral politics; educate these groups about important policy issues; educate and persuade other party members to support the interests of these marginalized groups; and, finally place the interests of these groups on the political agenda and represent them in the legislative arena" (p. 6). This theory was derived primarily, though not completely, from V. O. Key's *Southern Politics* and the voluminous but historically inaccurate and circumscribed literature of the New Institutionalists. But once the theory is articulated, Frymer begins his unique and innovative critique. Of this theory's veracity about race and parties, he writes: "In their efforts to win elections, party leaders often resist mobilizing and incorporating blacks into the political system, and at times will go so far as to deny completely black Americans their democratic rights" (p. 6). The end result has been the "electoral capture" of African-American partisans, first by the Republicans (after the Civil War) and second by the Democrats (since the New Deal and the Civil Rights movement).

To substantiate his insightful thesis and accompanying critique, Frymer turns to two concepts: the median voter of Anthony Downs, and the persuadable and/or swing voter of numerous voting studies. Simply put, the median voter is a centrist and moderate individual who avoids extremes. Most importantly, the median voter is a rational voter concerned with winning. The persuadable or swing voter is among that group of voters that actually decides the outcome in each and every election. Neither group of voters, as perceived by the party elites, will react positively to race issues and policies. Thus, they are avoided.

Frymer then turns to a rich data source to provide empirical evidence and support for his own thesis and critique. First there is theoretical data drawn from party organizer, activist, and President Martin Van Buren; second are historical data in which an overview of party politics is made from 1866–1932,

1965–1996; third, 1980 demographic and survey data of Connecticut's third congressional district, New Haven; fourth, the Congressional Black Caucus legislative proposals data from 1970–1996; and finally, data about other captured groups. After analyzing these data sources, Frymer concludes that party leaders "reinforce racial prejudice and inequality instead of opposing it" (p. 206).

In the end, the author reveals that the theory of party competition is flawed, inaccurate, and poor scholarship. His analysis shows that it was not in the periods of intense party competition that the parties provided solutions to racial problems but in the periods in which they were the dominant majority. This is a highly recommended work.

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Elections and War: The Electoral Incentive in the Democratic Politics of War and Peace by Kurt Taylor Gaubatz. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999. 208 pp. \$45.00.

Alexis de Tocqueville decried the inability of democracies to conduct efficient foreign policy, while contemporary academics and politicians praise democracies for their pacific behavior. In *Elections and War*, Kurt Taylor Gaubatz shows why both are right. This important book confirms that electoral pressures constrain democratic leaders' ability to make war, but they also provide incentives to ignore belligerent publics. Gaubatz brings together many existing strands of thought in his "sophisticated liberal" (pp. 21–22) theory: Democratic publics are neither consistently pacific nor consistently belligerent; and appreciating the role of public preferences requires understanding how mass and elite opinion interact and the role of democratic institutions in translating those opinions into foreign policies and international outcomes.

The argument is carefully developed in stages. First, even when the public is enthusiastically pro-war, electoral processes create political space for legitimate antiwar voices and increase the government's cost of going to war. Second, contrary to conventional wisdom, Gaubatz finds no systematic relationship between electoral cycles and the pacifism or belligerence of democratic foreign policy. Rather, public moods influence behavior. Third, democratic elections directly affect opposing states' foreign policies. Transparency allows other states to see domestic incentives, gives democratic leaders a negotiating advantage, increases their ability to make credible threats as elections near, and encourages other states to influence election outcomes. Finally, Gaubatz shows, electoral politics influence international outcomes: democracies enter fewer wars just before elections and more wars after elections.

The quantitative and qualitative research supporting these arguments is both impressive and problematic. Gaubatz provides three case studies—the

Crimean, Spanish-American, and Boer Wars—to establish that democratic publics are not always pacific and that antiwar elites exist even within pro-war societies. As the author notes, however, belligerent pre-war publics may be a nineteenth-century artifact. Three more qualitative studies—the 1935 British and the 1940 Canadian and U.S. elections—support Gaubatz's claim that elections increase antiwar elites' influence. These cases suggest that elections restrain democratic leaders of antiwar publics but do not support the author's stronger claim that electoral pressures restrain even leaders of belligerent publics. The author provides two final cases—the Falklands/Malvinas and Persian Gulf Wars—to show that elections affect opposing states' policies. Both cases focus on democratic decision making and so cannot illuminate whether elections send signals affecting opposing states' policies. The Gulf case examines how foreign actors attempted to influence American domestic politics, but neither case directly evaluates democracies' ability to make credible threats.

Gaubatz employs aggregate empirical tests to support his more probabilistic claims: that democratic foreign policy is no more or less belligerent at different electoral cycle stages (a point seemingly at odds with the argument that elections restrain democratic leaders even when the public is pro-war) and that democracies are less likely to be drawn into war as elections near and more likely to enter conflicts just after elections. The quantitative study highlights the importance of strategic interaction but is limited by the data, which stop in 1976 and miss the recent wave of democratization. Moreover, Gaubatz cannot test his hypothesis that the nature of democratic foreign policy depends on public mood on the data, because he has no measure of mood. For this claim, he examines only the 1920–1938 period, where democratic publics consistently opposed war.

Elections and War compiles a complex argument about democratic public opinion, institutions, and war. That it has limits should not discourage readers from appreciating the breadth and depth of Gaubatz's contribution to our understanding of the relationship between democracy and war.

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The End of Utopia: Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy by Russell Jacoby. *New York, Basic Books, 1999. 236 pp. \$26.00.*

This polemic rails against what its author characterizes as the decline of utopian vision in contemporary political theory and practice. Since the 1960s, its claim is, left-leaning academics and activists have abandoned efforts to think about, to write about, and to act to realize possible futures that “fundamentally surpass” (pp. xi-xii) present realities. In the place of “radical” (p. 19) political theory aimed at informing “subversive and visionary” (p. 25) politics or even “revolution” (p. 63), we now find cultural studies, interpretive social criticism, and

multiculturalism—a lamentable retreat, according to Russell Jacoby, because conservative of the political status quo. Jacoby upbraids writers of jargon-filled academic prose that yields nebulous political implications, poking fun at prominent social theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Clifford Geertz, Andrew Ross, bell hooks, and Richard Rorty.

The End of Utopia is at points entertaining. Yet ultimately, it fails to convince. It consists largely of superficial literature reviews and ad hominem attacks in which the author oversimplifies and in many instances distorts the positions he rejects. Typical in this respect is the discussion of political theorist Michael Walzer's argument for “connected” social criticism. Walzer's claim is that to articulate normative critiques of social practices and institutions is an unavoidably interpretive activity, in the sense that it necessarily draws on culturally and historically specific beliefs about justice. Connected social criticism, Walzer argues—that is, criticism that proceeds by pointing to contradictions between people's values and the practices in which they engage—is less coercive and more strategically effective than “detached” criticism. In two short paragraphs, Jacoby reduces this argument to a mere preference for temperate critique and dismisses Walzer as “a lifetime member of a research society, the Institute for Advanced Studies, which gathers for weekly lunches in Princeton” (p. 118). Although Walzer's position is far from unassailable, a persuasive response requires an argument. That Walzer eats lunch in Princeton is hardly an argument.

The End of Utopia makes it abundantly clear that Russell Jacoby opposes bad writing and the status quo. It leaves mysterious, however, what the author supports beyond “radical” ideas and “fundamental” change. Which particular utopian visions and which particular radical transformations does Jacoby endorse? Oddly, he never says. On the final page of the book, he asks, “What is to be done?” and replies, “Nothing is to be done. Yet that does not mean nothing is to be thought or imagined or dreamed” (p. 181). Jacoby accuses most thinkers on the contemporary left of being “spongy and vague” (p. 19) and asserts repeatedly that postutopian political thought is insufficiently transformative, because it is oriented toward changing policy rather than “believ[ing] in a different future” (p. 180). Calls for inexplicit dreams and imaginings, however, are at least as “spongy and vague” and less politically transformative than analyses focused on policy.

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Condemned to Repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism, 1973–1996 by Andrew Bennett. *Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1999. 387 pp. Cloth, \$35.00; paper, \$17.50.*

The collapse of the Soviet Union has prompted many scholars to revisit and critically assess prevailing theories of international relations and state behavior.