

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