

with considerable depth. Kumar argues that message management breaks down into four basic functions: advocating for the president, explaining presidential decisions and actions, defending the president against critics, and coordinating presidential publicity. Each dimension requires a different set of skills and tactics (and often multiple presidential offices). She then examines in great detail, with primary source information from staffers inside the White House, the step-by-step process of the creation of a communications plan. With its stunning scope, this book can be read as an illumination of how Presidents Clinton and Bush promoted or dealt with some of the major political policy issues and scandals of the past decade, including Clinton's impeachment, the invasion of Iraq, the Valerie Plame CIA leak, as well as dozens of other events. Navigating new media trends requires new strategic approaches, and Kumar carefully captures the emergence of recent White House communications strategies, including online communications, speaking to special constituency groups, and "going local" to speak to local media sources.

In addition to its importance as an analytical evaluation of the routine styles of presidential (and surrogate) communications, this book is a treasure trove of exquisite gems illuminating the roles played by presidential staff, the strategic shaping of political messages, and the formal and informal interactions between presidents and the reporters that cover them, each told by the players themselves from inside the often-impenetrable walls of the White House. Kumar rightfully argues that we need to understand the White House not just from the outside but also from the inside. Her book "aims to build from inside the White House an understanding of the importance of communications to all that a president and his staff do" (p. xvii). The voluminous research and years of interviews have paid off in a volume that reveals the pervasive nature of presidential communications connected to every aspect of presidential governance.

The rapid communications technology changes, even in the short time served by the last two presidential administrations, necessitates that scholars stay abreast of communications strategies employed by the modern White House. This piece of creative and engaged scholarship does that and more and should be of substantial interest to scholars of the presidency and political communication as well as to those engaged in the practical process of organizing media messages in a wired world.

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Mandates, Parties, and Voters: How Elections Shape the Future
by James H. Fowler and Oleg Smirnov. Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, 2007. 197 pp. Cloth, \$74.50; paper, \$24.95.

Although politicians and pundits speculate about the policy effects of specific election outcomes, political scientists have been more likely to consider

how policy positions drive election results. In this book, James H. Fowler and Oleg Smirnov consider *both* questions simultaneously to develop a better theoretical account of the American political system. Using rigorous analytical methods, such as agent-based models and rational choice analysis, and a multitude of data sources, from surveys to market data, they provide a compelling and valid picture of American government that is rivaled in breadth and empirical consistency by few other explanations.

To build their analysis, Fowler and Smirnov focus on two problems that have proved vexing to previous rational choice models. The first pertains to the inconsistency between median voter predictions and actual policy predictions. By positing that political parties are uncertain about the position of the median voter, they argue that party positions evolve over time in response to the information they receive from margins of victory. At the most basic level, the argument is that large victories imply that the median voter is close to the victor's ideal policy point, thus inducing both losers and winners to move in that direction. Drawing on this same logic, they show that close elections create partisan polarization, confronting common beliefs that competition promotes centrism. Because the underlying theory accounts for party positions over multiple elections, an alternative argument—that polarization leads to close elections—is ruled out. Evidence for these points is drawn from an analysis of U.S. Senate candidates and nominal interest rates.

Fowler and Smirnov also tackle rational choice models of voting behavior, particularly in a way that unifies the book with other theoretical traditions. Theoretically, their principal hypothesis is that party responsiveness creates *signaling incentives* for voters. Again stripping the argument down to bare essentials, the general notion is that voters can effectively use voting decisions to influence party platforms, especially when social ties are accounted for in the analysis. In short, there is an incentive to vote. A creative aspect of the book is Fowler and Smirnov's use of both psychological variables, such as patience, and sociological factors, such as local segregation, in the theoretical analysis. This creates interesting opportunities for a rational choice model more amenable to empirical testing than some previous efforts. Not coincidentally, this means that not only does their basic voter model suggest new interpretations for old findings (for example, that religious voters are more likely to vote because they have longer time horizons), but it is also more consistent with a much wider array of literature than previous rational choice explanations have been. Evidence for these arguments is exploratory, but is based on both a survey experiment and American National Election Studies information and is generally convincing.

Though the book's arguments are based on a technical foundation, the book remains accessible to any reader with a moderate amount of training in political science or economics. Still, the book is best suited for a scholarly audience and will be most useful to those who are looking for new rationalistic explanations of the American political system. In particular, this book

should serve to stimulate a wide array of new empirical research. While the evidence provided by Fowler and Smirnov is consistent with their results and a valid test of their propositions, the extensive treatment given to theoretical ideas precludes wide-ranging analysis. In particular, there is no evidence about how media interpretations of events play a role in driving the political effects of mandates. Nor is there any test of the model's propositions that examine presidential agendas or party platforms through time. Yet, these questions serve to highlight the potential utility of this very convincing and very elegant theoretical treatment of American politics, making this book an important read for anyone interested in understanding how our political system works.

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Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment by Erin K. Jenne. *Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2007. 273 pp. \$45.00.*

The clearest statement of what this study is about comes late in the book. Radicalization of minorities is “largely driven by perceptions of bargaining leverage, which is a function of internal leverage (group size, territorial compactness, and autonomous institutions) and external leverage (assistance from exile organizations, military alliances, and/or kin states)” (p. 180). The model the author develops applies to territorially concentrated minorities that in most of the cases examined here have ethnic kin living in a neighboring state. The model also is most applicable to the study of minorities in democratic states since, as Erin Jenne points out at the very end of the book, ethnic entrepreneurship as a cause of ethnic mobilization may be more commonplace in authoritarian systems (p. 194).

In most other respects, this book aspires to be a universal grand theory that admits to few caveats of any kind. It also claims to have policy implications that, for the most part, take political correctness on ethnic relations to a new level. For example, governments “should be pressured to decouple membership in an ethnic community from citizenship in the state” (p. 197)—the false consciousness of our age. The model advanced by way of convoluted figures and text boxes is variously called a rationalist theory of bargaining, a spatial model, and, most accurately, a predictive model of minority claim making.

Jenne's exposition is well-organized and lucidly written. The empirical research into both better-known and more-obscure cases of ethnic competition in eastern Europe draws the interest of the reader: the shifting aspirations of Sudeten Germans in interwar Czechoslovakia, the status of Magyar minorities in postcommunist Slovakia and Romania, the jockeying of Slovaks and Moravians for enhanced status in Czechoslovakia before its collapse in 1993, and the very different agendas of Magyars in Vojvodina and