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Republican nomination, despite an elite "veto," contradicts their hypothesis. While it can be argued that he is an exception, other near-misses such as Howard Dean argue that the Cohen et al. paradigm may already be showing cracks. The major shortcoming of this book is that it views the environment of presidential nomination politics as too static. Byron Shafer and Amber Wichowsky ("The Nomination and the Election: Clearing Away Underbrush," *The Forum*, 2008) make an interesting post-hoc argument that Barack Obama and McCain won because they brought new, previously unaligned voters into the process. This new surge of activists argues for a more participatory process than the one Cohen et al. describe.

Despite these reservations, it is worth reiterating that even at its worst, *The Party Decides* is the best explanation yet written of the nomination process from 1988 to 2004. At its best, Cohen et al.'s new paradigm may still be the best guide to presidential nominations for decades to come.

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Party Polarization in Congress *by Sean Theriault. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008. 254 pp. Cloth, $80.00; paper, $24.99.*

Certainly one of the big questions in American politics these days concerns the cause and consequences of partisan polarization. While some scholars question the extent to which American society is increasingly divided politically, few question that our elite political institutions, especially Congress, are afflicted with extremes of partisan and ideological rancor.

For their part, political scientists have offered a multitude of explanations. In no particular order, scholars have argued that polarization is the consequence of partisan leadership strategies, the Southern realignment, excessive gerrymandering of legislative districts, greater geographic sorting of voters, primary elections, greater economic and social inequality, the success of the conservative movement in capturing the Republican Party, and countless others. In an attempt to sort through this web of competing and complementary explanations, Sean Theriault offers an "integrated model" of partisan polarization that "develop[s] a more complex understanding of the link between constituency change, institutional change, and party polarization" (p. 44). Theriault's straightforward explanation is that modest changes in the distribution of constituency preferences (induced by gerrymandering and geographic sorting) led to more ideological and partisan preferences among legislators, who in turn, supported partisan legislative reforms that exacerbated polarization even further. He does postulate a number of feedback effects (for example, Figure 3.2), but these ultimately play little role in his analysis.

Although there are many reasons to be wary of "garbage can" or "everything matters" accounts of political behavior and processes, integrative exer-

cises on a well-developed literature like that on polarization can be immensely valuable. This is especially true when previously unnoticed causal dynamics and interactions are established. Unfortunately, Theriault's project falls short of his goal of a unified model of polarization.

Much of the problem lies in the structure of the analysis. Despite the aspirations for integration, the bulk of the analysis lies in five chapters focused on distinct causes of polarization: gerrymandering, constituency sorting, activist polarization, procedural choice, and the transmission of partisan norms from the House to the Senate. In each case, the dependent variables are measures of partisan polarization. Consequently, the intervening causal steps postulated by his model remain largely unexamined. Moreover, very little attention is paid to the relative timing of changing of key variables in a way that would establish the causal priorities laid out in the model. It is not enough to show that legislators faced more partisan constituencies and more partisan legislative rules. The logic of Theriault's model is that the constituency change happened first and led to greater delegation to leaders. Yet, evidence on that point is not examined.

Nevertheless, Theriault might have achieved some degree of integration had his individual analyses been carried out in common metrics of polarization. But alas, they were not. The effects of gerrymandering are estimated on distributions of presidential votes; the effects of constituency preferences, activist preferences, and House membership are carried out on DW-NOMINATE scores; while the effects of procedural choice are carried out on party voting scores on key legislation. Consequently, when Theriault makes comparative claims like factor x accounts for w% of polarization while factor y accounts for z%, he is often comparing apples and hand grenades.

Despite falling well short of its goal of integration and unification, Theriault's book does make a solid contribution to the study of congressional polarization. Much new data as well as original analyses are brought to bear on what is now a central question in American politics. It is unfortunate that his findings are as disjointed and fragmented as the literature that he justly criticizes.

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America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 *by Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier. New York, Public Affairs, 2008. 432 pp. $27.95.*

The notion that "everything changed" on 11 September 2001 assumed the status of conventional wisdom in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against the United States on that now infamous day. In their wide-ranging history of American foreign policy from the end of the Cold War to September 11, Derek Chollet, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and James Goldgeier, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, firmly rebut that contention.