

gains now fail to capture disruptive innovation. In contrast, she explains, on a technological frontier such as biotechnology, the fostering of new entrepreneurial firms is the key to architectural innovation that implies competitive gains in competition with the West.

Using the idea of two-faced Janus, Iбата-Arens makes the case that on the technological frontier, nations that promote investment and ideation from the outside yet protect domestic interests are more likely to flourish. As she summarizes, “NTN (networked technonationalism) is global-minded and open to the outside world yet at the same time nationalistic within the domestic economy” (p. 225). This stands in contrast to older forms of technonationalism that sought to create internal stocks of innovative knowledge and protect them through closed business networks. The consequences are legion and well illustrated in this volume. For example, Iбата-Arens calls our attention to China’s early embrace of STEM education as well as encouraging students to study abroad to enable, in her view, an opening to external influences by domestic actors that then act upon the ideas that they bring back. We, as observers of nation-state growth trajectories, gain the insight from this work that the policy choices that nations make to engender technical entrepreneurship must be contextual to reflect the competitive environment and flexible to reflect the dynamic change so evident in recent events. Simple solutions, Iбата-Arens seems to imply, will no longer do.

*Beyond Technonationalism* will benefit anyone with interest in what drives Schumpeterian growth and, in particular, how the rise of novel technologies—in this case, biotechnology—challenges policymakers to be innovative in their turn. What we might also look forward to are extensions of this work into the organizational realm. Not only are these national policy-level ideas interesting at the policy level, they no doubt can link to organizational ideas of ambidextrous strategies that urge attention, Janus-like, both to old and new.

Overall, this book is a much-needed update to the political-economic view of national development and innovative entrepreneurship that are increasingly relevant in an increasingly turbulent world.

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**Conformity: The Power of Social Influences** by Cass R. Sunstein.  
New York, New York University Press, 2019. 176 pp. \$19.95.

In the polarized, post-truth, tribal era of politics that we find ourselves in, a book on conformity—how to understand it and take concrete steps toward

diminishing it—should (rightfully) be expected to be of great interest to many. In *Conformity: The Power of Social Influences*, the prolific Cass R. Sunstein delivers exactly this. This book stands out from Sunstein's other books in its focus on the broad societal implications of social influence. Sunstein grounds his argument in the principles underlying American democracy, and in doing so, he makes it difficult not to become depressed at how distant our current state of affairs seems from that ideal. However, Sunstein offers optimism in the form of a framework for actionable solutions.

Sunstein begins with a model of the two major features of human psychology that he says reinforce conformity: (1) the tendency to believe something is true if others believe it is true (especially “confident” others) and (2) the desire for positive social standing and reputation. In Chapter 1, he explains how conformity is frequently harmful because it encourages individuals to suppress their “private signals” (that is, expressions of what they individually think is right or wrong), which decreases the diversity of ideas in a group and ultimately leads to undesirable outcomes. In Chapter 2, Sunstein advances beyond the framework he has traditionally worked within by considering *cascades*, or the spread of ideas and practices through conformity pressures, which ultimately give rise to social movements. He acknowledges that cascades are not necessarily “bad”—they are likely what led to the rise of the #MeToo movement—but they were also likely crucial to the propagation of genocide during the Holocaust.

In Chapter 3, Sunstein discusses group polarization, one of his academic areas of expertise. He walks us through the research on how deliberation can lead groups to extremes and the factors that exacerbate and attenuate this tendency. Finally, Chapter 4 weds the aforementioned psychology research with the nuts and bolts of how American democracy works and how the Constitution was developed to keep conformity pressures in check. This is where Sunstein displays one of his specialties—applying the knowledge gathered in the academic world to the real-world problems faced by contemporary organizational leaders. He focuses on two specific aspects of the American system—the judicial system and affirmative action in higher education—as examples of the benefits of a diversity of viewpoints as a means of countering the negative effects of conformity.

A potential criticism lies in the somewhat underdeveloped acknowledgment of the *positive* aspects of conformity. Sunstein's focus on the costs of group influence and cascades is motivated by a (justified) fear of “unjustified movements of view” (p. 115). But another justified fear may occur to some readers, which is that constant scrutiny of “movements of view” may, counterintuitively, asymmetrically support the status quo and stifle the momentum needed for foundational change. In the introduction, Sunstein uses the phrase “unjustified

extremism.” So how do we then encourage *justified* extremism? Further, scholars familiar with the research on public deliberation may feel the existence of group polarization is a bit overstated, as a litany of individual-level and contextual factors (several of which Sunstein mentions) have been shown to moderate such effects.

Ultimately, Sunstein masterfully synthesizes decades of research into a coherent narrative and provides actionable ideas that can be used by a wide range of organizations. The book is another one of Sunstein’s that I expect to see in the hands of academics, policymakers, and businesspeople alike in the airport or local coffee shop.

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**Top-Down Democracy in South Korea** by Erik Mobrand. Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2019. 216 pp. Paper, \$30.00.

This book deals with one of the most pressing issues in South Korean politics—why, despite an active civil society and vibrant civic activism, political elites have remained unresponsive to and insulated from the public. In what Erik Mobrand refers to as a top-down democracy, political parties have not responded to political demands from below and have not effectively developed institutional channels for political representation. Mobrand argues that political elites manipulated electoral arenas as a means of maintaining the status quo while effectively blocking possible challengers, particularly progressive parties, through rigid legal regulation of parties and campaigning. Highlighting the long-enduring political institutions that originated with the founding of the Republic of Korea and the Park Chung Hee regime, *Top-Down Democracy in South Korea* challenges existing scholarship on Korean democratization, which mainly focuses on popular mobilization and social movements. In doing so, it clearly demonstrates how oligarchic and exclusionary political parties have been shaped over time and thus extends our understanding of the gaps and tensions between institutionalized politics and street activism in South Korea.

To understand the architecture of contemporary South Korean democracy, Mobrand pays attention to the “1963 system,” in which formal, competitive elections were held under the name of liberal democracy, but regulations governing party registration, campaigning, and political assembly were carefully designed in such a way as to keep certain forces out of contention. The 1963 system and its electoral infrastructure persisted even after the

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