

Federalist and Republican principles” (p. 10) is not explicated in this volume, nor does Ackerman analyze its long-term consequences, though he notes parallels in the New Deal clash between another popular President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the Hughes Court.

The mainspring of Ackerman’s argument is that Marshall’s accommodation was necessary because Jefferson’s victory reflected a permanent change in American politics: By 1800, the presidency had become the object of contestation between mass-based political parties. Hence, the winning candidate could claim a popular mandate and use the weight of public opinion to wear down judicial resistance to policy changes that faced constitutional objections; “presidential democracy” is Ackerman’s shorthand for this development.

The rise of presidential democracy is frequently asserted by Ackerman, but his own account of the political intrigue surrounding the selection of a president in 1800 suggests that it was not very different from the limited competition between elite factions of, say, 1796. In fact, only six states actually held a popular vote for the president in 1800; legislatures choose presidential electors in all the rest, with cloakroom machinations on all sides. This implies that Jefferson’s popularity was mostly personal, and not grounded in an electoral mandate from the mere 41,330 people who cast ballots for him. It was not until the election of Andrew Jackson that a plausible mandate for change was delivered by a mass political party, according to most historians of the American party system.

This is significant because a permanent accommodation of Republican principles was only necessary if Jefferson’s popularity was matched by succeeding presidents. This was not the case; presidential democracy, in Ackerman’s sense of the term, does not describe the distinctly unpopular presidency of James Madison or the feel-good administration of James Monroe. Of course, something other than the rise of presidential democracy might have required Marshall to make the accommodation identified by Ackerman. Perhaps the demise of the Federalist party and the gradual replacement of Federalists on the Court with Republican jurists prevented the chief justice from returning to the Founders’ original intent. Ackerman alludes to this, but does not consider that it would have happened without the emergence of mass parties that justify the label of “presidential democracy.”

Without a stronger defense of the claim that presidential democracy arose by 1800, Ackerman’s most provocative conclusions merit the Scottish verdict of “not proven.” His review of the election of 1800 and its ramifications is quite valuable in its own right, however, and his reinterpretation of *Marbury v. Madison* in light of the struggle between Jefferson and Marshall is both original and significant. Students of U.S. political and constitutional history will benefit from reading this book, and if they are not entirely convinced by the larger argument linking con-

stitutional change and American political development, they must still reckon with its primary components.

What’s the Beef? The Contested Governance of European Food Safety. Edited by Christopher Ansell and David Vogel. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006. 389p. \$67.00 cloth, \$27.00 paper.

Designs on Nature: Science and Democracy in Europe and the United States. By Sheila Jasanoff. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. 374p. \$49.50 cloth, \$18.95 paper. DOI: 10.1017/S153759270702374

— Adam Sheingate, *Johns Hopkins University*

In 1999, a truck dumped four tons of genetically modified soybeans on the doorstep of British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Operated by Greenpeace UK, the truck carried a banner that read, “Tony, don’t swallow Bill’s seed.” The action occurred amidst a rising chorus of voices critical of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Ultimately, the public’s wholesale rejection of GMOs prompted Britain’s major food retailers to remove all GMO products from their shelves and forced the British government to restructure its food safety apparatus completely.

At precisely the same moment the controversy over GMOs erupted in Britain, American scientists were isolating human embryonic stem cells with the capacity to develop into any type of human cell, raising the hope for future therapies to treat diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer’s. Eager to build up its leadership in the life sciences, the Blair government entrusted the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA), the agency that regulates assisted reproductive technologies, with the responsibility for oversight of embryonic stem cell research. With little public controversy, the HFEA has approved several research protocols using stem cells. Today, the UK is a global leader in human embryonic stem cell research, attracting top scientists from around the world, including the United States.

What explains these divergent responses to biotechnology in the UK? The puzzle deepens when we consider that in the United States, GMOs have penetrated American markets with little public attention or outcry, but divergent opinions over embryonic stem cells have become a topic of presidential debate; several American states have created their own stem cell research programs in order to circumvent federal restrictions on funding. Nor can one reduce such differences to the facile view that “Americans are from Mars, Europeans are from Venus.” There is great diversity of opinion within Europe itself. In Germany, for example, there has been a vocal debate over the ethical issues surrounding embryonic stem cell research, albeit for different reasons than in the United States. Meanwhile, German discussion of GMOs, though far from approving, has been relatively muted.

These are intriguing puzzles for students of comparative politics, and the two books under review here shed

considerable light upon them. Sheila Jasanoff's *Designs on Nature* offers a compelling account of the divergent national experiences with biotechnology in the United States, Britain, and Germany. Jasanoff artfully renders an ethnography of science and democracy in each country, showing how the contested relationship among scientists, the public, and policymakers shaped, and was shaped by, a distinct political culture of science. She calls this political culture a "civic epistemology" that includes ideas about the kinds of knowledge—for example, expert or lay—deemed relevant for assessing scientific uncertainties and novel technologies. In each of the three countries Jasanoff studies, these ideas influenced debates around, and ultimately shaped the development of, biotechnology. In the United States, a technocratic approach to scientific risk assessment subsumed biotechnology under existing *product* regulations: The products of biotechnology were treated no differently than those produced by conventional means. In Britain, a tradition of empiricism and deference to expertise produced a novel set of rules for biotechnology alone: The distinct *process* of genetic modification defined the scope of policy action. In Germany, policymakers sensitive to the legacies of Nazi experimentation and prodded by a politically savvy Green Party crafted a state *program* of biotechnology that enshrined shared values around public deliberation and a respect for human dignity.

Cultural explanations of politics often paint with broad strokes, unable to account for the diversity within national experiences or over time. Jasanoff avoids this pitfall completely. Her book explores how the United States, Britain, and Germany approached issues such as genetically modified foods, assisted reproductive technologies, stem cell research, bioethics, intellectual property, and technology transfer in distinct ways. In doing so, she shows how cultural frames interacted with contingent events and past policies to produce different outcomes, both across and within countries. At the same time, these varied stories about product, process, and program capture a central, almost elemental quality about democratic politics in the three countries.

Gaps will undoubtedly remain in a book so ambitious. Jasanoff does devote a chapter to the role of the European Union, both as a venue for biotechnology policy and as an important influence on the domestic politics of Britain and Germany. However, *Designs on Nature* is mostly a book about national policy styles. Similarly, global forces do not come into play much either; only brief mention is given to the influence of World Trade Organization rules or the Codex Alimentarius on policies toward GMOs. Moreover, efforts to capture a national policy style toward biotechnology in the United States overlooks the emerging differences among states and the proliferation of individual state programs to circumvent federal bans on funding for embryonic stem cell research. Finally, some political scientists will find aspects of politics strangely absent from Jasanoff's account. Although the conflicts over authoritative knowledge described by the

author certainly shape biotechnology policy, so does the push and pull of powerful interests, as well as the rules of the game that structure where authority resides for policy decisions and the resources available to actors who wish to challenge or support them.

Readers looking for answers to these questions will find many of them in the selection of essays edited by Christopher Ansell and David Vogel entitled *What's the Beef?* The chapters in this volume examine European struggles over food safety including GMOs, hormone-treated beef, the crisis over BSE or mad cow disease, and various food scares ranging from dioxin-laced chicken feed to tainted Coca-Cola. In an introductory chapter, Ansell and Vogel argue that European food safety is much more than a routine struggle over policy. Rather, it is an example of *contested governance*, "a more pervasive and fundamental form of conflict . . . [about] who should make decisions and where, how, and on what basis they should be made. Contested governance is associated with a pervasive sense of distrust that challenges the legitimacy of existing institutional arrangements" (p. 10). As the various chapters show, food safety crises and concerns precipitated intense struggles within European nations, between European member states and the European Union, and between the EU and its trading partners before the WTO.

Indeed, this book offers wide-ranging insights that will be of interest to a broad range of scholars. Chapters on the creation of new food safety agencies in France (Borraz, Besançon, and Cleargeu), Britain (Rothstein), Germany (Steiner), and the EU (Buonanno), following the food safety scares of the 1990s, reveal both the opportunities and obstacles to institutional change. Discussion of the cultural dimension of food (van Waarden) and the distinctive policy style of the EU (Skogstad) demonstrate the important role that ideas play in the perception of risk and the approach to regulation. The dynamics of multi-level governance are evident in chapters about civil society mobilization against GMOs (Ansell, Maxwell, and Sicurelli) and the adoption by the European food industry of better safety practices (Bernauer and Caduff). The harmonization of national food safety standards charts the history of struggles to create a single European market (Alemanno) and helps explain why European standards often runs afoul of WTO rules (Young and Holmes).

In sum, *What's the Beef?* offers a fine-grained, detailed look inside the issue of food safety. At the same time, it reveals a great deal about the struggles over European integration and the multitude of forces pushing and pulling at this "polity under construction" (p. 219). Indeed, *What's the Beef?* is about much more than food safety, just as *Designs on Nature* is about much more than biotechnology. Together, both books convincingly show how contemporary issues of governance often entail more than questions of who gets what, when, and how. Increasingly, it seems, policy struggles are also about the process of

decision making (technocratic or participatory), the locus of authority (state or market), and the burden of responsibility when things go wrong (government or individual). In revealing the essence of these contemporary struggles, it emerges that we have become more skeptical about scientific authority, even as we become more dependent on technical expertise to assess the risks of modern life.

Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggles in American Politics. By Earl and Merle Black. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007. 286p. \$26.00.

DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707072386

— Sean M. Theriault, *University of Texas at Austin*

Earl and Merle Black have delivered another insightful book that describes contemporary politics by examining historical trends. They argue that the proper understanding of American politics—from election to policy—requires a regional analysis. In their own words: “Important geographical divisions, we believe, are at the heart of the very close national battles between Democrats and Republicans. American politics becomes much more interesting—and easier to understand—when the party battles are examined region by region” (p.xi). Their five regions are the South, Northeast, Pacific Coast, Midwest, and Mountains/Plains.

Having written three authoritative books on southern politics (*Politics and Society in the South* in 1987, *The Vital South* in 1993, and *The Rise of Southern Republicans* in 2003), the authors in this book offer us their broadest interpretation yet of contemporary American politics. Following in the fine tradition of their previous books, the Blacks have skillfully blended history and data to proffer a compelling argument about the utility of examining intraregional variations in order to understand politics today. The first half of *Divided America* describes the various regions and the second half describes how these regions have voted for and are represented by the House, the Senate, and the presidency. The conclusion nicely brings these parts together to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of contemporary politics in the United States.

The authors argue that America is politically divided because each party has a stranglehold on two regions. They show how Democrats have come to dominate the Northeast and Pacific Coast and how Republicans have captured the South and Mountains/Plains. According to their analysis, as goes the Midwest, so goes the nation. Republicans were able to dominate the House from 1995 to 2007 because they won a majority of seats in the Midwest. They kept control of the Senate during this period (with the brief Democratic interlude in 2001–2) and the presidency in 2000 and 2004 only because of their nearly monolithic control in the South and Mountains/Plains. The Blacks correctly predicted that if voting trends in the Mid-

west continued to favor the Democrats, the Republicans would find it harder to maintain control of the House.

The authors do more than focus on the regions’ similarities and differences in politics. Their analysis is more complex and their argument more insightful than that. When appropriate, they examine, within each region, a variety of characteristics and demographics, including religion, gender, and race. Such an analysis offers individual-level explanations for issue positions and voting trends in categories like “new minorities,” “Catholic men,” and “non-evangelical Protestant women.” The Blacks argue that it is the transformation of these groups politically and the concentration of these groups regionally that have brought about the current divide in America.

While this level of analysis may seem tedious at various parts in the book, the reward for sticking with it reveals itself at the end. The Democratic Party is favored by minority women (by 52%), non-Christian white women (by 45%), minority men (by 38%), and non-Christian white men (by 20%). The Republican Party, on the other hand, is favored by “three groups of white Christians” (p. 246)—white Protestant men (by 38%), white Protestant women (by 22%), and white Catholic men (by 20%). The remaining category is white Catholic women. Winning this demographic will yield control of the political system. Accordingly, Democrats and Republicans are keen to capture their support. Understanding this key fact provides insight to the parties’ campaign strategies.

If there is a fault in the analysis, it is that the book can appear to be clunky at times. Balancing analysis with prose is sometimes tilted too heavily toward the former; for example, “The Democrats drew their large advantages from minority women, non-Christian white women, minority men, and non-Christian white men” (p. 71) would be better understood without the forced demarcation of men from women. In fact, throughout the book, only a few times does splitting the groups by gender yield insight (such as with Catholics)—in nearly every other case, it just gets in the way. The presentation of the analysis in tables and charts is sometimes less than user friendly. For example, connecting the dots with lines makes more sense when the x-axis is years, but much less sense when it is regions.

The Blacks have something important to say to both political junkies and researchers. While casual readers may, at times, become frustrated keeping track of the multitude of groups, regions, and numbers in play, they are rewarded by gaining insight not only into the current partisan divide in Washington, D.C., but also into the features and history of the House, Senate, and presidency. To scholars of American politics, the authors divide the difference between those studying the mechanics of institutions and those studying the political behavior of the American public by offering a cogent argument about the interplay of groups and regions in contemporary American politics.