and well written and would be at home on related syllabi as well.

At War with Government: How Conservatives Weaponized Distrust from Goldwater to Trump.
By Amy Fried and Douglas B. Harris. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021. 305p. $120.00 cloth, $30.00 paper.
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Americans' trust in governmental institutions has been in freefall since the 1960s. In *At War with Government*, Amy Fried and Douglas Harris explain this decline in trust as the result of an intentional strategy deployed by political elites on the American right. Specifically, they argue that the conservative wing of the Republican Party has weaponized distrust to build and maintain political coalitions. Fried and Harris connect their research on the conservative war with government to scholarly work on parties, social movements, polarization, racial politics, the submerged state, and more, making this a timely book with relevance for researchers in American politics, sociology, and history.

The book revolves around several key points. The conservative weaponization of distrust has, Fried and Harris argue, (1) provided conservative elites with organizational, electoral, institutional, and policy benefits; (2) been closely tied to opposition to racial equality; (3) been deployed selectively to target political institutions like Congress and the presidency when those institutions are controlled by Democrats; and (4) encountered difficulties in the policy arena due to Americans' tendency to distrust government while supporting specific policies (i.e., Medicare).

The authors explore these themes in four substantive chapters that chronicle the historical rise and development of the war on government. The first is a survey of Americans' skepticism toward government beginning with the American founding and continuing through the Nixon years. Fried and Harris argue that the Republican Party's flirtation with the politics of distrust began in the 1920s, gaining steam during the New Deal era as a conservative backlash against two developments. The first was the Democratic Party's successful use of government in New Deal programs. The second concerned racial inequality, specifically the Democratic Party's role in advancing civil rights legislation. From the 1960s onward, Republican politicians like Barry Goldwater and Richard Nixon began framing distrust as a racialized, states' rights issue. As Fried and Harris explain, "To conservatives, the untrustworthy state was one that dismantled racial segregation and sought to reduce racial disparities limiting opportunity" (p. 40).

In the next substantive chapter, aptly titled "Here to Help," Fried and Harris document Ronald Reagan's artful use of antigovernment messaging as "glue" to hold together a conservative coalition of groups from Christian fundamentalists to free-market capitalists (p. 60). In this and the next substantive chapter, which focuses on the Clinton era, Fried and Harris identify two apparent contradictions in the conservative war on government. For instance, Republicans cultivated an oppositional movement based on distrust of government while pursuing or holding control of one or more branches of government. In addition, Republicans' war on government was selective. When faced with a Democratic Congress and a Republican presidency, Reagan-era conservatives attempted to establish the president's supremacy by decrying congressional overreach and peddling the unitary executive theory. In the next several decades, Republicans flip-flopped on their views of the constitutional separation of powers based on which party controlled a given branch at a given time. As Fried and Harris note, "For all their anti-government rhetoric, these Reagan-era conservatives were not against governmental power so much as they were against others exercising it" (p. 85). This contradiction features prominently in Fried and Harris's discussion of Gingrich's efforts to amplify the role of Congress when the branch was controlled by Republicans and to run against Congress when it was controlled by Democrats.

The final two substantive chapters focus on the strategic deployment of distrust during the presidencies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. From 2008 to 2020, the war on government took an aggressive turn toward extremism and nativism. In the chapter on the Obama era, Fried and Harris discuss the Tea Party's uncompromising opposition to Obama's agenda and anger toward government. Again, distrust was the glue that held together the various members of the Tea Party coalition, from libertarian elites to activists motivated by racial resentment. In the final substantive chapter, Fried and Harris describe Trump's presidency as the logical consequence of the Tea Party's intensification of the war on government. Trump, they argue, both ramped up opposition to national institutions and to established political actors and explicitly combined antigovernment sentiment with racial resentment and economic populism in an overt effort to shift power to himself. Trump made explicit the dark underbelly of the conservative war on government: an exclusive view of Americanness in which distrust of government means opposition to the use of government power to benefit nonwhite Americans.

Fried and Harris conclude the book by considering paths toward "recovering collective memory of good government" (p. 206). They argue that the organizational, electoral, institutional, and policy areas that were breeding grounds for distrust in government can be co-opted to strategically promote *trust* in government. They also recommend elite messaging that reminds Americans that

there is no party of small government and that government can be a force for good. The book ends with the sobering acknowledgment of the long-term damage that the war on government has inflicted on Americans' relationship with their political institutions (p. 213).

In sum, *At War with Government* is a richly researched and highly readable book that explains how and why the war on government is asymmetrically the product of the American Right. Two questions remain. The first concerns within-party disagreements. At times, Fried and Harris present the weaponization of distrust as a tool of extremist Republican elites, providing examples of clashes between these peddlers of distrust and establishment Republicans. At other times, Fried and Harris situate the war on government in a narrative of asymmetric polarization that pits the Republican Party against institutions controlled by Democrats. Of course, both things can be true. But more clarity would be welcome on the extent to which the promotion of distrust is the strategy of an insurgent faction attempting to undermine both its own party *and* national institutions and the extent to which it is the preferred strategy of the Republican Party as a whole.

The answer to the question of whether distrust comes from a faction, the party, or both is integral to resolving the second lingering question. What role must the Republican Party play in a successful mission to repair relations between the American people and their government? If the Republican Party, writ large, continues to weaponize distrust, then the Democratic Party must bear the burden of making peace with government alone (save for a fundamental restructuring of the party coalitions). In a climate where polarization between the two parties dominates political discourse, Americans on the Right would likely dismiss reviving trust in government as a partisan agenda item of the Left. One reading of Fried and Harris's book suggests that the war on government has and continues to be the work of an insurgent faction within the Republican Party. If this is the case, the quest for renewed trust will require at least two things: a scholarly focus on identifying this faction and an emphasis by scholars and pundits alike on conflict within parties. as well as polarization between them. Such a combination might create space for an alliance with a wing of the Republican Party that seeks to revive a view of government as an active force in upholding order, norms, and institutions.

COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Fighting the First Wave: Why the Coronavirus Was Tackled So Differently Across the Globe. By Peter Baldwin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 392p. $24.95 cloth.

Coronavirus Politics: The Comparative Politics and Policy of COVID-19. Edited by Scott L. Greer, Elizabeth J. King, Elize Massard da Fonseca, and André Peralta-Santos. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2021. 662p. $45.00 paper.
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Writing about responses to the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2020 was a bit like writing from the front about the outcome of a war during a major battle whose winner was not yet clear. It is therefore to the credit of the authors and editors of these two volumes that they read less like ancient history than informed assessments of a war's trajectory at midpoint. This is essentially what they are, and the endgame of the war is still far from certain.

Historian Peter Baldwin's title is explicit on this point. In an analysis that is organized around how public health strategies bring individual rights and the state's efforts at collective protection into tension, if not conflict, he points out that pre-vaccine, "ancient preventive tactics" comprised the armamentarium of governments autocratic and democratic alike. Based on a less than systematic but meticulously documented catalog of responses, he concludes that neither regime type had performed better at the end of the first wave, highlighting the diversity of responses among superficially similar political architectures. Baldwin correctly points out the fallacy that science dictated policy responses: "politicians picked and chose among the possibilities science held out" (p. 18). Sometimes, as in the case of Donald Trump in the United States and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, it is already clear that they chose badly, if not malevolently. In other cases, this judgment cannot yet be made.

For example, although Baldwin concedes that "which tactics worked best will not be known for years" (p. 54), and his concluding chapter on "The State in a Post-Pandemic World" is commendably tentative, he spends many pages in chapter 3 ("The Politics of Prevention") critiquing the "Mephistophelean bargain" (p. 68) of Sweden's relatively laissez-faire early approach to the pandemic. However, *The Economist* estimated as of January 21, 2022 ("The Pandemic's True Death Toll," https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/coronavirus-excess-deaths-estimates) that excess deaths from all causes in Sweden since the start of the pandemic, although substantially higher than in its Nordic neighbors, were comparable to the German figure, lower than France's, and just over half as high as in Britain. All those countries locked down earlier and more aggressively, albeit in somewhat different ways. Estimates from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation as of October 2021 (Haidong Wang, "Estimation of Total and Excess