This book has one important limitation: Brenkman's decision to explain what he means by "Islam's geo-civil war" in the penultimate chapter, rather than in the introduction. Had he done the latter, Brenkman would have made a better case for his decision to criticize the works of other political thinkers and it would have been easier for the reader to follow the logic of his argument. This criticism aside, this is a thought-provoking book that deserves serious consideration. His decision to combine Arendt's views with Berlin's opinions is an important contribution to current scholarly debates on the Bush administration's reactions to the September 11 attacks. Finally, Brenkman's book is a timely intervention at a time when a new leadership takes control over the executive branch.

–Carlos L. Yordán

DEMOCRACY AS THE CURE FOR DEMOCRACY

Leif Lewin: *Democratic Accountability: Why Choice in Politics Is Both Possible and Necessary* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Pp. vi, 247. $45.00.)

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In *Democratic Accountability,* Leif Lewin challenges the claims of politicians in Western democracies that the problems with or failures of their policies can often be attributed to incompetent or unresponsive bureaucracies, the inexorable forces of history and globalization, or unexpected, disappointing outcomes in their policies despite their well-intentioned decisions. Lewin's thesis and findings persuasively and skillfully refute the above perceptions or excuses of Western democratic leaders and provide seven case studies as "counterexamples" to such ideas as "history is predetermined," "nation-states must go to war," and "globalization wipes out the freedom to choose" (p. 7). The organization of Lewin's book and its major ideas are cogently illustrated by several diagrams.

Lewin provides a broad, deep, and useful literature review of democratic, policymaking, and other relevant academic theories. He surveys, compares, and analyzes the ideas and research of Robert Dahl, Arend Lijphart, Joseph Schumpeter, Anthony Downs, Francis Fukuyama, Alexander George, and Seymour Lipset on such topics as pluralism, historicism, competition among policymaking elites, bureaucratic power, and the gap between academics and politicians in American foreign policy. In general, Lewin argues that theories and practices in Western democracies should reject fatalistic determinism: an elitist perception that politicians merely need to develop a docile consensus among their citizens in order to have the concealed, discretionary power to formulate and legitimize their policy decisions, and that such international forces and organizations as the United Nations and

European Union (EU) and globalization inevitably and progressively weaken the ability of citizens in Western democracies to influence their economic and political circumstances and futures. Referring to statistics from elections and public opinion polls, Lewin reveals the paradox that, while Western democracies experience declining voter turnout and public trust in their politicians, their citizens continue to express great faith in democracy. Thus, Lewin asserts, "Citizens should again have opportunities to hold the politicians accountable and be able to dismiss governments. More transparency, and less consensus formation by elite cartels behind closed doors, is needed in today's politics" (p. 194).

The seven "counterexamples" that Lewin details to substantiate his thesis about the potential and need for greater democratic accountability vary in their degree of persuasiveness. His most convincing "counterexample" is his case study of how the European Union (EU) has not only promoted economic growth and cooperation among EU members but also established a stable, long-term peace in Europe through federalism and a balance of power. "The integration of Europe is impressive evidence that man is the author of his own history. It shows as well that there is no law of nature that nation-states must go to war" (p. 61). Despite this success, Lewin concludes in this chapter that the EU needs to become more accountable to its ordinary citizens in order to become both more democratically legitimate and more effective in its policies.

This book's chapter on globalization, however, is less compelling. Lewin rejects the perception of politicians as "powerless prisoners of the global market" (p. 63) and asserts that "politicians cannot escape the fact that, at the end of the day, it is they who bear ultimate responsibility for the state of things in the world" (p. 89). In this "counterexample," Lewin seems to underestimate the extent to which globalization has reduced the power and policy choices of Western democratic leaders because of, rather than despite, their accountability to their citizens. Currently, for example, it is difficult for any American president to negotiate effectively with and pressure China on such issues as environmental protection, human rights, and labor conditions in China as the American economy becomes increasingly dependent on China for low-cost consumer goods and the financing of its national debt.

Nevertheless, *Democratic Accountability* is a well-researched, articulate, and innovative contribution to democratic theory, especially in post–Cold War Western Europe. This book's research, organization, and thesis will benefit scholars from a wide, diverse range of subfields within and outside of political science, including rational choice theory, historicism, and pluralism. It compares favorably with Benjamin R. Barber's thesis in *Strong Democracy* that only a more citizen-based, more participatory democracy can ameliorate the current ills of democracy.

–Sean J. Savage