

his job.” But the body language changes once again when “back in black space . . . Easy moves in a loose-limbed, comfortable way” (p. 12). The implication of this read exemplifies the central task of the book: to “offer a visual dynamic that captures an aspect of the city that is central to the urban micropolitics with which I am concerned by animating the city ‘as a kind of force field of passions that associate and pulse bodies in particular ways’” (p. 11).

Similar readings are performed on numerous other films, from Wim Wenders’s *The End of Violence* to Joel Schumacher’s *Falling Down*, among others. In the latter, we see a similar kind of content analysis. A character confronts a series of different conflicts as he roams through different Los Angeles neighborhoods and urban spaces. Each neighborhood is composed of different groups with different cultures and practices, which we are to see as traces of the effects of urban power. The main character’s departure from his familiar spaces to those that are unfamiliar is supposed to show us that “a social and occupational apartheid has made LA’s inner city a *terra incognita* for one white middle class Angelino” (p. 60).

I was unable to find any real insight about politics or the “political” in these analyses. The real problem with this book lies in the kind of theoretical assumptions it makes about the nature of politics and knowledge itself. True, it is important to see that civic-minded strain in urban politics, like Dahl’s emphasis on pluralism in *Who Governs?* as ignoring the pathologies of urban spaces fragmented by racial and class-based structures of power and difference. But in many ways, this is a straw-man approach to the issue. The insights of later urban theorists like Richard Sennett, Douglas Massey, William Julius Wilson, and John Mollenkopf, among many others, are not dealt with in any way in this text (I was unable to find references to them in the index and notes). The problems of social power and inequality within urban space are real. But it seems to me that this requires an analysis of the mechanisms of power for any theory to be counted as political, in any genuine sense of the word. The reliance on post-

modern and poststructuralist theory does not take us far in this regard—indeed, it takes us backward. What is needed is not an exploration of the phenomenological or experiential aspects of social power but an understanding of the ways that power and space are able to affect consciousness, disrupt forms of social solidarity and organization, and pervert institutions away from democratic ends.

Yet it is necessary to take up seriously Shapiro’s contention that the arts can provide us with some kind of genuine insight into the political. After all, the author is not interested in these “macro” or institutional analyses of urban politics. A crucial element in his argument is to counterpose Deleuze to a deeply problematic (and basically incorrect) reading of Hegel. Whereas Hegel represents for Shapiro the tendency to see rational thought progressing toward a “conciliation” with the world, Deleuze provides “an alternative model of contingency” (p. 29). The cynical indictment of reason, characteristic of poststructural and postmodern thought, repeats itself here without any originality, and it is a style of thinking that does the opposite of what its adherents claim: Rather than place us in opposition to forms of social power, it provides us with nothing positive to say politically. It is true that art can indeed illuminate dimensions of social power of which we are normally unaware, but not through an emphasis on subjectivity, the life world of individuals, or the contingency of their perspectivist views. This provides us with an abstraction from, not a genuine knowledge of, the power dynamics that cause social pathologies. What is required is an insight into the causes of power relations, not the contingent knowledge of those that it affects.

In short, it seems that the means of contesting power relations are not to be found in the cultural anthropology of their depiction, but from a correct understanding of their causes and logics. In the end, this becomes the genuine limitation of the style of theory exemplified in *The Time of the City*: an undertheorization of the processes of social power that leaves us with a politics that is, in the end, objectively ineffectual.

AMERICAN POLITICS

Remaking the Presidency: Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, 1901–1916. By Peri E. Arnold. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009. 328p. \$34.95.
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— Jeffrey Crouch, *American University*

In *Remaking the Presidency: Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, 1901–1916*, Brownlow Award winner Peri E. Arnold addresses a perplexing question about the Progressive Era presidents: At a time when Congress dominated politics, presidents were passive, and an active federal government

was not in vogue, “Why and how did [Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson] construct activist leadership in a context that was apparently inhospitable to such activism” (p. ix)? And, of course, the inevitable follow-up question: what should be made of William Howard Taft, whose much less regarded presidency was bookended by these two giants (p. ix)?

Biographers and historians have examined Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson many times before, but Arnold argues that a more comprehensive look will require analysis of the context in which they served and changes in the institutional presidency, as well as each man individually (p. x). Arnold begins by identifying the key contextual factors

that helped create the political world occupied by Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson: among them, a loosening of political party ties, the growth of interest groups and mass media, and a public ready for change (pp. 9–13). The times challenged all three presidents to seize upon new opportunities to act boldly, which required power, skill, and the public's blessing to act (or “warrants,” to use Stephen Skowronek's term) (p. 19).

Theodore Roosevelt's “leadership project” worked (p. 20). He successfully pushed his policy agenda not just because he grabbed the reins of leadership: Also important was the fact that he was not as bound to the Republican Party as, say, his predecessor, William McKinley. To Arnold, “McKinley was a man attuned to the identities and structure of the old system. Roosevelt was a man capable of hearing the demands and seeing the opportunities unfolding in what would be called the Progressive Era” (p. 38).

William Howard Taft was not as fortunate. Tied to Roosevelt's reform program on one hand and, on the other, to the more conservative Republican Party that had pushed Taft up the professional ladder his whole life, the Ohioan was unable to keep everyone happy as president. He lacked a “coherent political vision of his own” after his prior experiences had trained him to be “an eminently adaptable functionary, a superb subordinate” (p. 72). Put slightly differently, “his leadership style did not contain the insights and tool kit he would need to successfully use the presidency of that era” (p. 203). Where Taft should have been “going public” and trying to persuade Congress, he let opportunities to push his agenda pass by (p. 203).

Woodrow Wilson, the politically savvy former Princeton professor and president, then New Jersey governor, projected a “prime ministerial” style and cared less about the substance of legislation and more about working with a legislative majority to get things done (p. 192). Unlike his predecessor, Wilson “presumed the authority to speak to the people, over the heads of his party and Congress, explaining his intentions and interpreting the people's needs,” and in so doing satisfied “the Progressive Era's expectations of a progressive president, fulfilling what Roosevelt had begun in 1901” (p. 194).

Much of Arnold's analysis is in the six chapters of the book containing case studies, with each president receiving both a chapter on his “political education” and another on several of his key experiences while president. This technique allows Arnold to effectively showcase each man's formative experiences, and to explore how those events impacted his presidential leadership style.

In chapter 2, Arnold looks at Roosevelt's path to the presidency. Roosevelt's experiences as an administrator in the Civil Service Commission and the New York City Police Commission, and as assistant secretary of the navy, were especially valuable: Arnold points out that they taught Roosevelt how to work with bureaucracies, helped him

learn who to trust, and generally showed him ways to get things done (pp. 25–32). In chapter 3, Arnold explores how these and other experiences heavily influenced Roosevelt's style as president. Having established a reputation as a reformer who also understood the importance of public perceptions of his work, President Roosevelt was able to negotiate between the public's reformist impulses and the Republican Old Guard (p. 70). He recognized the tightrope between the old expectations and new demands, and walked carefully.

Arnold considers the professional experiences of William Howard Taft in chapter 4. On paper, Taft appeared to have an ideal resume for a president. His legal credentials were stellar: state court judge, solicitor general of the United States, and circuit court judge (pp. 73–80). His successful stints as colonial governor charged with installing a civil government in the Philippines and as war secretary seemed to suggest great management abilities as well (pp. 80–94). And yet, Arnold argues, Taft was not building skills essential to presidential success. He did learn that being loyal to the Republican Party was good for his career, that hard work would please his superiors, and that it made sense for his own politics to adjust to the situation in which he found himself (pp. 94–7). Things fell apart for Taft when, as Arnold documents in chapter 5, he could not follow the old script as president and achieve outcomes satisfactory to everyone. Instead of bringing together the reform-minded and Old Guard Republicans, Taft's clumsy handling of such issues as tariff reform alienated them both, and helped open the door to Woodrow Wilson's election in 1912.

Wilson's leadership style was, to Arnold, an effective match for the Progressive Era, provided Wilson enjoyed a “disciplined partisan majority” to lead (p. 200). Chapter 6 shows, among other things, that Wilson enjoyed success as leader of a supportive majority while president of Princeton, where his reform work helped him become “the best-known university leader in America” (pp. 143–4). Chapter 7 examines Wilson's leadership on tariffs, financial reform, and antitrust, and Arnold rightly characterizes his wins on these issues as having “shaped and fulfilled a large part of the Progressive Era's legislative agenda” (p. 193). Arnold stops short of claiming that he has identified the start of the modern presidency, though, suggesting in the book's closing pages that this role is rightfully occupied by Franklin D. Roosevelt (p. 207).

This book is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Progressive Era presidents, and Arnold's command of earlier scholarship is apparent throughout. He hews closely to the academic literature, often drawing from Fred Greenstein, David Mayhew, Samuel Kernell, Jeffrey Tulis, Lewis Gould, and others. A recurring work is Stephen Skowronek's *The Politics Presidents Make* (1993), which reminds the reader that the context constraining a president's options matters. It also is worth noting that

Arnold's writing is clear and economical, and straightforward enough for casual readers, but still rigorously detailed. Save for a few moments that dally a bit simply because of the level of detail included, the book moves along at a steady clip and wraps up in just over two hundred pages of text, excluding notes.

Remaking the Presidency: Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, 1901–1916 would be a fine fit in a course on the American presidency or the Progressive Era, or as a supplemental text in an introductory course on American politics.

Imperfect Union: Representation and Taxation in Multilevel Governments. By Christopher R. Berry. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 272p. \$88.99 cloth, \$27.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592711000120

— Mick Moore, *Institute of Development Studies*

If this book were a stock, I would buy. It will be widely cited and much used. It has a simple policy message, identifying a “big government” problem that can be alleviated by some straightforward legislative and institutional reforms. The problem is rooted in the prevalence in the US West and Midwest of “special purpose jurisdictions” that have the right to finance themselves through charges on local property and sales taxes. Special purpose jurisdictions are local government districts that are responsible for a single function—most often education, but also libraries, health, hospitals, public welfare, highways, air transport, water transport, parking, drainage, flood control, soil and water conservation, irrigation, parks and recreation, housing, sewerage, solid waste management, water supply, transit systems, power utilities, cemeteries, and industrial development. The boundaries of special purpose jurisdictions overlap, often in quite confusing ways, with one another and with the boundaries of the more familiar general-purpose (“territorial”) local government units—towns, townships, municipalities, and counties.

From a panel data set covering the whole of the United States for a period of 30 years, Christopher Berry extracts a great deal of evidence that the presence of special purpose jurisdictions inflates the overall tax bill, and some evidence that it decreases the efficiency with which the money is spent. One of the remedies is legislation to raise the barriers to the creation of new special purpose jurisdictions. Another is to retime the elections to their boards, such that they are held simultaneously with one another and with elections for general-purpose local government units. This expectation that tinkering with election dates might be so consequential stems directly from the logic of Berry's theory of the politics of special purpose jurisdictions.

The core of that theory is Berry's intuition that “removing a policy issue from the purview of general-purpose government and placing it under the jurisdiction of a single-function district enables the interest groups concerned with the issue to increase their influence over it”

(p. 51). Stereotypically, teachers vote to take education away from the purview of county governments by creating single-function education districts. They arrange to have the elections for the boards of those districts on days when no other elections are held. In consequence, voting is dominated by teachers. Boards are unduly concerned to advance teachers' interests. Because the boards have considerable authority to fund education from charges on local property and sales taxes, they have both incentive and opportunity to spend money in ways that will advantage teachers in relation to parents, citizens, taxpayers, and the collective interest. It is then plausible that enabling voters to elect school boards at the same moment that they elect sanitation and highways boards and town and county governments might dilute the influence of special interests.

Berry provides us with no direct evidence on this particular point. However, it is very likely that other scholars will pursue the many leads and arguments that he has provided, partly because the issues are of practical importance, but also because his book is a model of clear, rigorous, and objective research and exposition. It is a treasure trove for colleagues teaching graduate classes in public finance, urban studies, and political economy. It presents us with some fine summaries and critiques of relevant literatures, formal models of political processes, considerable quantitative analysis, and a series of empirical propositions that cry out for further investigation.

The author convinces me that, relative to general-purpose local government units, special purpose jurisdictions increase public spending. I am less convinced that the consequences are as bad as is implied by the marketing blurbs on the cover, crafted as they are to appeal to “small government” sentiments. His evidence that special purpose jurisdictions spend money less efficiently than general-purpose governments relates mostly to one small corner of the governance business: public libraries. Is it unambiguously bad for democracy that special purpose jurisdictions provide organizational niches for a variety of special interest groups? One might see merit in this from a pluralist tradition, especially in contexts in which elections for general-purpose governments are dominated by highly partisan political parties. And might there not be useful policy conclusions from the set of Berry's findings most likely to be ignored: that the inflationary effects of special purpose jurisdictions on the level of public spending are entirely negated by the local presence of strong political parties able to integrate the interests of different sections of the electorate?

The United States is the only country in which special purpose jurisdictions are prevalent and numerous. The further work and debate to which this book will give rise will continue to be located within the study of American politics. There is, however, also a strong potential link to a set of issues that is underexplored in comparative politics,