

cess from nearly every angle, and often illustrating his point with pertinent examples. At the same time, Davis makes a compelling argument for how the confirmation process has evolved substantially in the past 50–75 years. If there is one drawback, it is simply that the amount of information requires a certain degree of prior knowledge of Supreme Court history in order to put the examples into proper context. While this would not be a problem for judicial scholars, students new to studying the Court could find themselves overwhelmed.

Overall, *Supreme Democracy* is a substantial contribution to the literature on the Court, particularly in how it relates to the other branches of government and to external players like the media and the public. Given the importance of the confirmation process and the wealth of information in this volume, it should be of interest to political scientists and legal scholars specializing not only in the Court but also in the presidency, Congress, the media, and public opinion in seeing how all of these institutions interact with each other during the unique judicial selection process.

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Paul Frymer. *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017. Pp. xi+312. \$35.00.

In the acknowledgments section of his new book, Paul Frymer, a professor of politics and director of the Program in Law and Public Affairs at Princeton University, states that the issues he examines here are the same that he tackled in his two previous books: “how the mechanics of American political institutions . . . shape racial formation and embed histories of racism” (ix). In his first two books—*Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010) and *Black and Blue: African Americans, the Labor Movement, and the Decline of the Democratic Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007)—Frymer did exactly that, as he tackled questions of black membership in labor unions and Democratic party politics and larger efforts by various parties to appeal to the African American voting bloc. His latest book examines the role of race in territorial expansion over the vast sweep of US history. While seemingly narrower in focus, his provocative study is actually more extensive in chronology and further reaching in scope than his previous volumes.

In this fine book, Frymer examines the role of race in the construction of American empire by studying federal land policy and the politics of territorial ex-

pansion. He argues straightforwardly that from the outset “land policies were also critical to the nation’s racial formation” since such policies provided the national government with mechanisms “for taking territory by manufacturing new racial demographics, a white ‘tipping point’ that eased the politics of declaring the land part of the American state” (10). In short, he argues that the “use of land policy to pursue the project of territorial expansion illuminates novel understandings of the workings of both state and racial formation over the course of the long nineteenth century” (11). While westward expansion is often presented as the stuff of rugged individualism and mythic achievement, Frymer demonstrates instead that it should be seen as the result of a carefully calibrated process he summarizes as “the politics of controlled movement” (74).

Lawmakers consistently approached questions of land policy and territorial expansion through the prism of race. Uppermost in their minds throughout American history was “the notion of a white nation [which] remained dominant and quite rigid” (20). From 1783 through 1912 (the years the book covers), “political leaders championed the argument that to be an American meant to be white,” and this understanding, Frymer contends, explains why “national expansion was simultaneously fueled *and* limited by racism, both promoting the taking of lands owned by non-white populations and thwarting national efforts when such populations were too large to be removed” (20).

With these stipulations as his foundational arguments, Frymer surveys US expansion from the end of the Revolutionary War until the admission of New Mexico to the Union on the eve of World War I. In the nation’s early years, he finds that the national state was relatively weak in terms of size and power; officials, however, were conscious of this fact and, trying to avoid political overstretch, consequently devised land policies that favored compactness of territorial space. As Americans pushed west, the national government encouraged a practice of “armed occupation” that effectively turned white settlers into civilian defenders of the land they acquired under the government’s watchful eye, thus boosting the American presence without the need for additional soldiers.

Generally, Congress and state legislatures supported pro-settler land policies, allowing preemption over structured settlements but “not in a manner that was divorced from the promotion of racial hierarchies.” Instead, “preemption and homesteading meant opportunities for white settlers . . . to transform the frontier and confirm Jefferson’s dream of a racially and culturally homogenous empire of liberty” (132).

By the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the American state was secure and assured in its ability to control the continent but insecure about what the racial makeup of the national community might become. If Americans could largely ensure, through various mechanisms, that western territories would be peopled by a white settler population and thus preserve the racial makeup of the

nation, the matter became more complicated when the United States contemplated attaching lands that belonged to other, less white nations. Frymer shows how the debate over the potential acquisition of Cuba, once seriously considered as a goal, ran aground in part because of the problem of slavery but also on the question whether Cuba's large nonwhite population could ever be assimilated into the United States. "The debate about race in America was not just about North versus South, abolitionists and slaveholders; it was also about making and keeping America white. And on that," Frymer observes, "there was overwhelming support" (150).

The limits of manifest destiny were clearly exposed in the debate over incorporating territories won in the Mexican War. In general, the United States preferred to acquire Mexican land but not Mexican people. Lands that were bereft of Mexicans and that could be swiftly populated by the controlled settlement of white populations (like California) were fast-tracked for territory status and then statehood, while others (like New Mexico) lingered for decades. The ability of the national government "to move populations strategically into contested territories was critical in explaining both why the United States ultimately annexed some lands and not others, and how the nation radically altered its landscape with white American settlements" (174). In short, its efforts at carefully drawing boundaries "so as to maximize land and minimize people" worked spectacularly well. The United States gained half of Mexico's territory after the war north of 32 degrees but took in only 1% of its population (198). The key desideratum during this and later periods was, in the words of one member of the House of Representatives, that the national government "Americanize that Territory, and . . . infuse into it rapidly, and at as early period as possible, as large a portion of American feeling, American tendencies, and American instincts and disposition as possible" (201).

The enduring role of race in western settlement is further confirmed when Frymer considers the failure of two removal efforts—Indian removal in the 1830s and 1840s, which only partially succeeded in its goals and sparked a fierce, vocal opposition in its wake, and the failure of the colonization movement in the antebellum years. Frymer shows that the nonwhite status of Native Americans and enslaved blacks made efforts to remove and resettle them less desirable as part of any controlled settlement of the continent. In an epilogue carrying the analysis into the twentieth century, Frymer notes that debates over acquiring an overseas empire in Latin America, Hawaii, and the Philippines sparked old debates about the value, or lack thereof, of lands that were not—or could not be easily—stocked with white populations. Race and empire were inseparable.

Frymer's book is deeply engaged with several bodies of scholarship in history and political science, especially work in American political development (APD). He has read widely and thought expansively on this topic, producing a volume

that has important things to say to scholars in history, political science, sociology, APD, American studies, and other disciplines about the role of land in questions of racial construction and the ways in which race was always at the forefront of territorial politics.

While Frymer draws on a number of primary sources for quotations and to illustrate his points—as well as for the very well chosen epigraphs that begin each chapter—his work is heavily dependent on secondary sources in history and political development. As such, the primary source base for this work is limited. But the book's great value lies in its function as a work of synthesis, drawing together disparate scholarship, finding connections among the conclusions of others, and meshing them with his own arguments. His work speaks to historians as well as students of APD; he writes inclusively here, borrowing language from both groups as he addresses the concerns of previous scholarship but without ever descending into off-putting jargon or esoterica. His writing is clear and sure-handed, as is the way he navigates through any number of historiographical disputes in his treatment of the literature.

Building an American Empire is, in short, a terrific book—important, thoughtful, provocative, and seminal. Frymer's big-picture thinking and argumentation should spawn many subsequent studies that can take his synthetic thesis and apply it to in-depth studies of particular land policies and population settlements to see, in finely grained analyses, where his argument fits best (or not as well) and what factors (chronology, context, population size and density, history of a particular region, races and ethnicities of native or immigrant populations) can explain those variations. But regardless of what scholars find when they do further research, this book both charts a path for such studies and gives all of its readers a convincing reminder of the enduring importance of race in American development, not only in terms of culture and politics but also in the ways those pursuits intersected in the acquisition and settlement of lands.

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Juliet Hooker. *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp ix+296. \$53.00.

Juliet Hooker's *Theorizing Race in the Americas: Douglass, Sarmiento, Du Bois, and Vasconcelos* is at once a scholarly reflection on four of the Western Hemisphere's most influential theorists of race and a cri de coeur to scholars all too