

Old Labour and New' (p. 160) even though many have challenged the very idea of 'Old Labour'.

This is encapsulated in Massey's title and organising concept: 'the modernisation of the Labour Party'. Massey does nuance this by defining 'modernisation' as 'an accumulation of different organisational initiatives from different authors, across the party's period in opposition' (p. 17, also p. 223). Yet, it is dubious to stitch together several distinct and contingent phenomena, from John Golding's selection 'fixing' to New Labour's use of Cranfield management courses, and dub the resultant tapestry as a single process of 'modernisation'. This distinctly resembles the framing of partisans, like Blair, who cast themselves as 'modernising' an anachronistic 'Old Labour'. In fairness, 'modernisation' has (in this reviewer's eyes, wrongly) become a synonym for 'the rise of New Labour' in much of the literature. Yet, at least other accounts have conceded that this convention parrots rather than carefully scrutinises the political assumptions of historical actors (i.e. that their opponents were somehow 'backwards' or 'outdated'). Massey does not include a similar disclaimer.

By accepting without pause the framework of 'modernisation', Massey also passes over crucial constitutional reforms which had little to do with Sawyer, Kinnock and Blair. In her own account of Labour's transformation, Meg Russell rightly highlighted the internal campaigns for feminist positive discrimination. Their successes culminated in Labour's All Women Shortlist (1993), which in 1997 facilitated the largest single increase in female MPs in British history. Yet, in Massey's account, this deeply significant (and deeply controversial) turning point is barely mentioned.

Despite these issues, Massey's account makes a valuable contribution. His book scrutinises several key moments in Labour's organisational history, convincingly demonstrates Sawyer's importance and meticulously reconstructs the pivotal 'realignment of the left'. Students and scholars will find it a helpful and stimulating resource.

Rachel M. Blum, *How the Tea Party Captured the GOP: Insurgent Factions in American Politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020; xii + 164 pp.; ISBN: 978 0 226 68749 0, ISBN: 978 0 226 68752 0, \$90.00 (hbk); \$25.00 (pbk).

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DOI: 10.1177/13540688221081896

From its raucous birth in the early Obama administration to its fading as a distinctive force after the election of Donald Trump, the Tea Party exerted a powerful and de-stabilizing

influence on US politics. But what exactly *was* the Tea Party, and how did it achieve its influence? According to Rachel Blum's valuable new book, it is best described as an 'insurgent faction' of the Republican Party: a sub-coalition within the party that sought to renegotiate the GOP's policy consensus through combative and procedurally radical tactics. This conceptualization, defended against the more common label 'movement' in Chapter 2 of Blum's book, is the cornerstone of her wide-ranging and insightful argument. Although Blum draws from previous research on the Tea Party, especially [Parker and Barreto's \(2013\)](#) work on 'reactionary conservatism', defining it as a faction of the GOP situates her in a different analytic space than other scholars of the Tea Party. Focusing less on mass attitudes or congressional behaviour than on the grassroots activists, Blum's argument is also more explicitly *institutional* than previous scholarship. In her telling, the Tea Party was not some free-floating mass movement, but rather a strategic and targeted network of organizations profoundly shaped by electoral rules and particularly by the institutional structure of its 'host', the Republican Party.¹

Within this party-centred theoretical frame, Blum marshals a diverse array of empirical evidence and ranges across a variety of political settings. In Chapter 3, she draws on participant observation of Tea Party meetings, interviews with activists and a survey of delegates to the 2013 Virginia Republican Convention to illuminate the motivations of Tea Party Republicans and distinguish them from their establishment counterparts.² As she notes in her preface, Blum's own childhood immersion in Christian Right politics gave her both entree into and empathy with the world of conservative activism, the fruits of which are evident in this chapter. According to Blum, the Tea Party's core motivation was not disagreement with the GOP's policy stances (though it did differ in emphasis), but rather in the *intensity* of its commitment to these principles. Tea Partiers were also profoundly distrustful of Republican politicians and officials, whom they viewed as too focused on 'winning elections'. They therefore sought to hold them accountable to conservative principles by infiltrating state and local Republican parties and replacing unreliable candidates with ones willing to put principles first.

Chapter 4 describes the organizational implications of the Tea Party's strategy. As Blum notes, the Tea Party lacked top-down leadership. Moreover, though influenced by media figures such as Fox News's Glenn Beck, Tea Party activists were often sceptical of the national organizations that sought to exploit and direct its grassroots energy. It nevertheless developed a clear organizational structure, one patterned on the federated state and local structure of the Republican Party.³ Blum provides evidence for this institutional isomorphism through network analysis of Tea Party websites, whose clusters of connections mirrored the nested geographic structures of congressional districts and states.

Blum's characterization of the Tea Party as the 'sum of myriad smaller insurgencies' (p. 44) suggests that the faction's decentralized yet networked structure was likely a key source of its resilience in the face of establishment efforts to manipulate or neuter it.

In Chapter 5, Blum delves more deeply into the Tea Party's goals and priorities, drawing on human and automated content analysis of Tea Party blogs. Tea Partiers' distinctive attribute, she argues, was *distrust*, which stemmed from their perception of severe threats to their cultural dominance (Parker and Barreto's 'reactionary conservatism'). Unlike the Christian Right, a 'consociational' faction of the GOP that aimed to renegotiate the party's policy consensus through bargaining and cooperation, the Tea Party embraced confrontation and was perfectly willing to punish Republicans electorally if doing so furthered its intra-party goals. The Tea Party differed from the Christian Right in priorities as well as tactics. While the two factions shared many policy preferences, the Tea Party did not prioritize social issues, and its opposition to policies such as gay marriage was rooted more in distaste for cultural outsiders than in religious conviction. The Tea Party's relationship with libertarianism was more complex but fundamentally similar. Libertarian groups, such as the Koch-backed Americans for Prosperity, initially viewed the Tea Party as a long-sought-after mass base for free-market conservatism. Ultimately, however, they came to the conclusion that Tea Party had little ideological commitment to small-government conservatism. At bottom, Blum argues, the Tea Party's core concerns were neither religious nor economic, but cultural: immigration, policing, guns and a general concern for a 'way of life that's lost' (p. 65).

In her final two chapters, Blum turns to the Tea Party's broader impact on the Republican Party. Chapter 6 examines congressional roll call voting, bill sponsorship and press releases, focusing on the three main Tea Party-related caucuses (the Tea Party Caucus, the Liberty Caucus and the House Freedom Caucus). The key pattern that emerges from this analysis is the continuity in the Tea Party's priorities (cultural threats), sensibility (distrust of elites) and tactics (procedural radicalism) between the grassroots and Congress. Chapter 7, in addition to recapitulating the argument, tackles the Tea Party's relationship with the even more disruptive force that followed it: Donald Trump. Blum argues that Tea Party faded away after 2016 not because it lost its battle with the GOP, but because it *won* - a victory signalled by the nomination and election of President Trump. Those used to thinking of the Tea Party as a libertarian movement, and Trump as *sui generis*, may bristle at this suggestion. But if one accepts Blum's argument that anti-elitism and cultural threat, not economic liberty or religious traditionalism, lies at the core of the Tea Party, the claim that Trump inherited and subsumed the Tea Party becomes quite compelling.

Overall, *How the Tea Party Captured the GOP* offers an insightful and stimulating perspective on one of the most consequential phenomena of 21st-century US politics. Given its connections with a wide range of topics, from grassroots activism to congressional factions, I expect it to be of broad interest in political science and beyond. Blum's work also exemplifies the value of combining multiple methods, from participant observation to network analysis, to make a compelling and substantively important argument. Americanist political science would benefit greatly from more work in this mould.

Notes

1. Although she builds on Theda Skocpol's work with Vanessa Williamson [Skocpol and Williamson 2015] on the Tea Party, Blum's argument actually struck me as having more in common with Skocpol's et al. [2000] earlier research on the organizational structure of voluntary groups.
2. Unfortunately, Figure 3.1 on page 34 appears to have been the victim of an editorial error, as it matches neither the surrounding text nor the corresponding figure in Blum's dissertation.
3. In a footnote, Blum draws a parallel between the Tea Party's institutional isomorphism with its target and that of literal insurgencies documented in the literature on civil conflict.

References

- Parker C.S. and Barreto M.A. (2013) *Change They Can't Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Skocpol T., Ganz M. and Munson Z. (2000) 'A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States'. *American Political Science Review* 94: 527–546.
- Skocpol T. and Williamson V. (2015) *The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Esen Kirdiş, *The Rise of Islamic Political Movements and Parties*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019; xiii + 224 pp.: ISBN: 9781474450676, £64.50 (hbk).

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DOI: 10.1177/13540688221081908

In two significant recent contributions to the literature on Islamic politics, Esen Kirdiş and Avital Livny propose some novel explanations regarding the emergence and success of Islamic actors in the electoral arena. Livny offers essentially