

# The Academy of Political Science

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Democrats increases vote likelihood for Democrats, but we need to know whether that remains true when we hold partisanship constant. If so, that would be an important finding; without that test, we cannot judge. More fundamentally, Brewer needs to decide whether these variables are endogenous, exogenous, or both and then test appropriate hypotheses.

In the end, *Party Images* is long on potential but short on execution. It remains an interesting read that will illuminate the nature of partisan beliefs for most readers. The book's high price and thin findings make it difficult to justify using as a supplemental text for a political parties course, presumably its primary audience. Nonetheless, Brewer's methodology and comprehensive approach show promise and I would consider using subsequent editions if they address some of the shortcomings discussed here.

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**Colin Powell: American Power and Intervention From Vietnam to Iraq**  
by Christopher D. O'Sullivan. Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009. 240 pp. \$34.95.

Colin Powell had a remarkable career of public service, serving ten Presidents, beginning with his commission into the Army in 1958 under President Dwight D. Eisenhower. His career as a senior official is most noteworthy: "Of the seven seats on the National Security Council (NSC) he has held three" (p. 2). This career provided him with an unparalleled level of intimacy with the recent history of U.S. military intervention. "In one capacity or another, Powell was involved in almost all major American military engagements over the past four decades" (p. 197).

Christopher D. O'Sullivan's excellent biography begins the narrative with Powell as a youth in Harlem in the 1940s and '50s, and spans to the end of his appointment as Secretary of State in 2005. The account focuses on Powell's career of public service and his very important role in foreign and military policy, spending few words on other aspects of his life. The work is well supported with textual and archival research and demonstrates high standards of scholarship. It is well written and well organized, with a fairly standard chronological account preceded by a thoughtful introduction that lays out the central themes of the book and of Powell's career of government and public service.

These core themes include the so-called Vietnam syndrome and the Weinberger/Powell doctrine, the search for a foreign policy consensus after the Cold War, and Iraq and the "fog of war." The author introduces and then repeats and supports throughout Powell's belief in the value of thorough planning, clear missions, cooperation and alliances, public candor, overwhelming force, and exit strategies. Powell is convincingly described as a principled but pragmatic servant and as a "reluctant warrior," a characterization that

helped contribute to the growth of his popularity and his transformation into a “national icon” (p. 84).

The author clearly admires Powell (not unusual for a biographer vice his or her subject), and takes a dim view of many of the presidents he served, especially the Republican ones. At times, the narrative includes scathing criticism of almost everyone in an administration except Powell. In the end, though, the critical lens does come to focus on Powell, especially with regard to his performance as Secretary of State in the first term of the George W. Bush administration. Given his beliefs and the strength with which he defended them in earlier administrations, we are surprised and baffled by Powell’s failure to curb the Bush administration’s appetite for war in Iraq and his failure to stand up for his principles by either speaking out publicly or threatening to resign. “Given these apprehensions, why was Powell not more outspoken about the flawed military planning?” (p. 170). The author asks the hard questions and effectively shares a sense of mystery, but does not resolve the puzzle. In my view, the biggest single failing of this biography is, after framing this baffling sequence in the life of Colin Powell so effectively, that the author does not offer more than the thinnest of speculative explanations for his subject’s actions (or lack of action).

There are many biographies of Colin Powell. Why write this one? The author does not directly say. In the annotated bibliography that follows the main text, the author points out several high-quality works in the existing biographical material focused on Powell. The author is critical of the work describing many of the other players in the narrative, especially biographies of Ronald Reagan, for being “published or subsidized by conservative think tanks” and lacking appropriate objectivity (p. 202). This biography clearly does not have a conservative bias. The author notes the “remarkable and even unorthodox relationship” between Powell and *The Washington Post*’s Bob Woodward, mentioning that Powell gave Woodward hundreds of hours of exclusive interviews and that Powell features prominently in many of Woodward’s books (p. 85). In fact, a great number of the citations in this biography reference one of Woodward’s works, though the author questions Woodward’s methods more generally (p. 205). This book does have the benefit of retrospective over (presumably) Powell’s entire career of public service, and is a work of quality scholarship. However, the lack of author interviews with any of the principals leaves little to distinguish it from the pack.

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**The Right to Rule: How States Win and Lose Legitimacy** by Bruce Gilley.  
*New York, Columbia University Press, 2009. 336 pp. \$34.50.*

The question of legitimacy—who gets to rule and why—is perhaps one of the oldest problems in politics. From ancient tribal councils to the modern