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John Clark and Charles Prysby have assembled an impressive collection of essays that further our understanding of partisan change in the contemporary American South. Building on the work of an earlier set of projects dealing with the behavior of local party activists in the eleven former Confederate states (see Hadley and Bowman, 1995, 1998), this volume provides a highly informative and timely update.

Political transformation in the South since the 1990s is characterized by the rapid ascendancy of the Republican Party. By the end of the last decade, the GOP has a clear advantage in presidential contests, an edge in congressional elections, is at parity in state-wide contests, and has made considerable gains in state legislative races. In this dynamic political environment, Clark and Prysby focus on the role of local party organizations. Specifically, the research project is designed to assess the political behavior of local party activists at the county level – county party chairs and county executive committee members.

Local party activists took part in the Southern Grassroots Party Activists (SGPA) survey of 2001, which is the follow up to the original survey administered in 1991. Like its predecessor, the 2001 SGPA survey is quite massive, with a representative sample of over seven thousand party activists evenly balanced between Democrats and Republicans. The survey is not utilized for state-by-state comparisons; instead the authors pursue a south-wide approach because the pattern of political change is consistent throughout the region.

The study is divided into three sections. Part A shows how demographics impact the behavior of party activists. For Democrats, religion is not a major source of conflict (Chapter 2). Among Republicans, however, there is a strong religious cleavage because those who identify with the Religious Right are more conservative on social issues. This religious division has been and will continue to be one of the primary sources of factionalism within the GOP.

For Republicans, race is a non-issue if only because the number of black activists is so small (Chapter 3). For Democrats, however, race is a highly salient source of friction because of the biracial composition of the party. No longer is it the case that the issue positions of black and white Democrats vary to a great

degree (although there are exceptions, such as affirmative action), but the current cause of concern is that black people remain under-represented and unless more of the local leadership positions devolve to African-Americans, there is a likelihood that their participation may decline.

Chapter 4 highlights the important role of in-migration on the character of local party organizations. In-migrant Democratic activists are more liberal and thus have pushed the party left whereas in-migrant Republicans reinforce the overwhelmingly conservative stance of GOP activists. Compared to 1991, the percentage of in-migrant Democratic activists has grown but it still lags behind the GOP, a party whose advancement is in no small part attributable to the efforts of in-migrants.

Part B really gives the reader a sense of the broad change that has transpired among activists of both parties. The parties have become much more ideologically polarized since 1991 and this is reflected in the fact that on every issue Democrats are more liberal and Republicans are more conservative (Chapter 5). In 1991, 36 percent of Democratic activists were liberals and in 2001, 53 percent considered themselves liberals. In both surveys the percentage of conservative Republicans exceeded 80 percent.

The degree of partisan attachment is related to ideology and issue positions (Chapter 6). Those party activists who are not cross-pressured exhibit the strongest partisan attachments. Activists who are weak in their attachments are so perhaps because they hold positions that are incongruent (e.g., a conservative Democrat) with the majority. But it is getting harder to pick a fight among fellow partisans because the parties have become more ideologically cohesive and distinctive from each other (Chapter 7). A result of this has been a large decrease in the percentage of party activists who perceive there to be a good deal of factionalism within their party. Finally, elite polarization has been greater than polarization in the electorate. Although Democratic activists are not as ideologically distant as the GOP is from their voters and all voters, the continuing shift to the left may allow for Republicans to make further electoral inroads (Chapter 8).

Part C considers the degree of participation and involvement among party activists. Greater competition since 1991 has fostered greater party activism, particularly among Republicans. It is the case, however, that ideology is correlated with purism, or the inability to compromise on principles, and this can result in withholding support for candidates as well as selective participation (Chapter 9). Greater participation is manifested in a range of campaign activities (Chapter 11) and also in greater party integration as measured by an increase in communication across levels of party organization (Chapter 12). The greater involvement among party activists is primarily issue-based since the incentive to participate is more purposive than solidary or material (Chapter 10).

Call it serendipity if you will, but the timing of the 2001 SGPA survey could not have been better. The 1991 survey was conducted just before the GOP took off and the 2001 survey occurs after the GOP registered rapid gains. Given the events that transpired over the decade, this study provides excellent insight into the conflict and change that has taken place within and between party activists. The main theme running throughout is that increased party competition has served to revitalize local party activists, who are more polarized because of greater ideological consistency within the parties. The upshot of this transformation is

party renewal and a more responsible party system that offers the electorate a clear choice at the ballot box. This volume should certainly be of interest to scholars of southern politics, political parties, and political development.

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Pascal Delwit and Philippe Poirier, eds, *Parlement puissant, électeurs absents? Les élections européennes de juin 2004*.
Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2005.
€25 (pbk), 320 pp. ISBN 2 8004 1350 6.

This volume provides an overview in French of the 2004 elections to the European Parliament. It contributes to the already extensive literature on the topic (Déloye, 2005; Lodge, 2005). Despite the title of the volume, most contributions do not address the paradox between a gradually decreasing turnout at elections and the simultaneous increase in the power of the Parliament. Rather, the book sets out with two objectives: a) to give an overview of elections in different member states and b) to analyse electoral behaviour and the 2004 results at a European level. It fulfils these goals with mixed success. Several contributions are of excellent quality, but the overall coherence of the volume is somewhat lost in the wide range of topics covered.

The first part of the book discusses European elections in different member states. For most countries, the contributions provide a thorough overview of the campaign, turnout and characteristics of the ballot. However, there are large imbalances in the countries that are covered. Philippe Poirier's contribution on one of the smallest member states, Luxembourg, is a thoroughly researched piece that goes into the details of Luxembourgian electoral law. (Indeed, the disproportionate coverage granted to the three Benelux countries is probably a result of the country of origin of the two editors, Belgium and Luxembourg. The three articles on the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg occupy more than one third of all the 156 pages devoted to country studies.) In comparison, the contribution on France consists of a mere nine-page description of campaign and results. Similarly, de Waele and Coman can provide but a cursory overview in their very short article covering all eight Central and Eastern European