

formation and participation in the states leave much to be desired. The otherwise informative section on term limits in Brace and Ward's chapter should also note the interplay of public opinion and institutions: While the public generally supports term limits, 20 of the 21 states that have adopted them have done so by voter initiative, and legislators in states lacking that aspect of direct democracy are highly unlikely to limit legislative terms on their own initiative.

Another omission is consideration of the burgeoning growth in prisons and prisoners in the states. Barrilleaux briefly notes the surge in corrections budgets in his chapter on state bureaucracy, but the implications of this for other areas of state policy, crime rates, and civil liberties merit further exploration. Corrections spending also provides a striking example of nonincremental policy change and because of its budgetary implications should have been included in Ringquist and Garand's chapter on trends in welfare reform, education, economic development, and environmental policy in the states. Melinda Gann Hall's examination of structural trends in the organization of state courts could also address the legal response to mandatory sentencing, crowded dockets, and prison conditions in the states.

This book would be of great value to American politics scholars who may not have looked at the state politics literature in recent years. The essays make clear that much has changed and that in this era of devolution, states and localities merit closer examination by scholars interested in executive leadership, political parties, legislative change, policy making, and the legal and institutional basis of federalism. Most chapters (Dometrius's piece on the governors is a notable exception) are probably a stretch for undergraduates. But this excellent collection should prove invaluable to scholars teaching or doing research in state or local politics.

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Is America Breaking Apart? By John A. Hall and Charles Lindholm. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999. Pp. 162. \$19.95.)

In the interest of full disclosure, I admit to being skeptical of and frequently exasperated by statements that start: "Americans believe/are/do . . ." These statements are especially problematic when they tidily sum up "the" American political culture because they rarely communicate the contingent, complex nature of political values and behaviors, and they are almost always more sociological than political. To fellow skeptics, I recommend approaching John A. Hall and Charles Lindholm's *Is America Breaking Apart?* with an open mind because it is a sprightly little book that takes a critical look at the stability of American political culture. Hall, a sociologist, and Lindholm, an anthropologist, do invoke the character of the American people as an explanation for the current state of politics; however, they recognize political factors—constitutional interpreta-

tion, institutional arrangements, political events and strategies—as influences on that character.

Is America Breaking Apart? answers the oft-expressed distress over identity politics and individualism, both of which are believed to degrade the traditional forces of American-ness. Hall and Lindholm aim “to bring back to general attention the cohesive power of the American experiment” (4), which melds profound individualism with pervasive associational impulses. This cohesion requires two things: individuals whose self-worth and self-image preexist their group memberships, and groups, composed of these adherents to the individualist faith, that are left alone by the state to forge a working civil society.

In the first part of the book, the authors trace the historical evolution of American political stability and unity, pointing to several interludes—the creation of the party system, Reconstruction, and the civil rights movement—during which major challenges to liberal capitalism were quashed or neutered and consensus around it was rebuilt. In the second part, they explore the mechanisms of homogeneity in Americans’ political values. Among these mechanisms is the juxtaposition of the belief in the goodness of America as an ideal with the reality of its mercenary politics. While Americans rue the profane, they will not gore their own special interest oxen to protect the sacred; hence, the political system remains recognizably corrupt, but stable. There is also the (not entirely consistent) “pervasive paranoia among Americans about the perfidious nature of groups other than those they may belong to” (127); this, in Madisonian fashion, thwarts the widespread acceptance of bad ideas. *Is America Breaking Apart?* moves quickly, with Hall and Lindholm offering dozens of conclusions about Americans. Some of these conclusions are their own; many have been made by others. The breakneck pace of the discussion means the authors often do not take time to explicate adequately or defend the practical import of what can be surprising, even outright dubious, claims. For instance, the observation that “Americans . . . tend to be suspicious of strong opinions and of any sort of zealotry” (95) ignores the facts that many Americans are perfectly happy to elect representatives who are proudly zealous and that extreme political positions—“three strikes and you’re out,” no governmental services for illegal immigrants, for starters—are transformed into far-reaching public policies because they reflect the majority opinion of people who vote on ballot measures or who answer the polls that lawmakers follow. Hall and Lindholm also observe, of “militiamen” and “black and white supremacists,” that “not even the most radical . . . wish to overthrow, or even oppose, basic American principles of democracy, equality, and justice” (117). This is untrue at least insofar as egalitarian supremacists are rare; more important, it is meaningless if the definition of these principles has to be made infinitely extensible to accommodate all views. The claim that “multiculturalism is . . . a consummately American phenomenon” (133) reduces multiculturalism to its palest version—“displays . . . of such innocuous items as food preferences, costumes, and holidays” (132)—and ignores the much more potent array of multiculturalism policies next door in Canada (where Hall himself lives).

Hall and Lindholm profess not to celebrate American political culture, and they are well aware of the repressive foundations underlying a homogeneity in values and practices so compelling that it includes even those—in particular, African-Americans and the working class—whose collective interests have been flagrantly betrayed. American political values and practices appear variously, as banal, vacuous, self-righteous, hypocritical, and bigoted. Still, Hall and Lindholm admire the staying power of the country. Although they are troubled by the particular sacrifices that have been made to achieve stability and coherence and by some of the principles around which Americans have converged, they appear as convinced of the ultimate value of unity as the alarmists to whom they respond. Postmodernists they are not.

Hall and Lindholm bring much recent and classic literature to bear on a multifaceted, sweeping argument. Consequently, there is a lot for one to take issue with, even for readers who may concur with the basic analytical or prescriptive inclinations of the book. This is not a bad thing, for *Is America Breaking Apart?* is a scholarly, lively, and highly readable book.

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The Movers and the Shirkers: Representatives and Ideologues in the Senate. By Eric M. Uslaner. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1999. Pp. 234. \$44.30.)

Do U.S. legislators vote in accordance with their constituents' views or their own views? Eric Uslaner argues that Burke's delegate-trustee distinction, in most cases, is a false dichotomy. Legislators' own views are the same as their constituents', or at least the same as those of the constituents who voted for them. Thus, legislators' personal ideologies are not generally in conflict with and do not have a strong independent effect on legislators' votes.

Uslaner's *The Movers and the Shirkers* places this analysis of representational style within the principal-agent, shirking literature (Carson and Oppenheimer; Kalt and Zupan). Ideological shirking refers to the practice of legislators casting roll-call votes independent of the preferences of their electoral constituents. Uslaner's aim in this book is to "bury the shirking literature rather than praise it, or even just to replicate it" (20). He does this by applying new measures and empirical tests to the shirking hypothesis. Ultimately, though, it takes a model to beat a model. Recognizing this, Uslaner draws from Fenno's concentric circles or multiple constituencies model as an alternative explanation for legislators' apparent deviations from geographic constituency preferences. Most "shirking" is explainable as legislators faithfully representing the ideological values of their reelection, primary, and personal constituencies. Once these constituency views are controlled for in empirical models, the effect of legislators' "pure personal ideologies" on their vote choices is relatively small and often statistically insignificant.

John A. Hall, a political sociologist at McGill University, and Charles Lindholm, a cultural anthropologist at Boston University, respond to the current spate of literature bemoaning America's decline—books that decry our politics as hopelessly divisive, claim that the country is. Claims that America is breaking apart—that our country is engaged in dangerous "culture wars"—come from both the political left and right and cite a variety of sources for our problems. For example, neoconservatives worry that the trend toward "multiculturalism" is undermining our sense of collective national identity. Charles Lindholm (born 1946) is the University Professor of Anthropology at Boston University. He is the author of nine books and over seventy articles and reviews. His writings have been translated into Spanish, Turkish, Chinese, Arabic, and Portuguese. Lindholm was born in 1946 in Mankato, Minnesota, the son of a civil servant. He attended East Denver High School. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Columbia College in 1968 he spent the next several years traveling in Afghanistan, Pakistan

Is America Breaking Apart? John A. Hall and Charles Lindholm. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999. 162 pp. | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. The question America confronts as a pluralistic society is how to vindicate cherished cultures and traditions without breaking the bonds of cohesion—common ideals, common political institutions, common language, common culture, common fate—that hold the republic together.804. View. Show abstract.