

Their experiment shows that referring to lobbying as “the ability of interest groups to communicate their views to public officials” has nearly three times the approval as “lobbying by interest groups” (p. 62). The fickleness of Americans runs deeper than that. When the authors ask about whose speech should be regulated, corporations and interest groups receive the harshest responses. But if the corporation is Ben & Jerry’s, rather than ExxonMobil, Americans find the former more benign than the latter. In addition, Primo and Milyo find that our conceptions of corruption in politics are so broad that we believe it exists whenever our “side” loses. This is problematic indeed, and the authors’ appropriately note that many reformists have offered a false promise: take out the money and all will be well. Even in a perfectly controlled public financing environment, someone’s interests are going to lose out to some other interest. That’s pretty much representative democracy for you!

Primo and Milyo acknowledge that other scholars have indeed offered some of the critiques they do here, but their framing and analysis of recent opinion data make a unique contribution on its own. What really sets this book apart, however, is its presentation of the analysis of experts in the field. We political scientists do not come out of this so well. Just like the American public, it turns out that what you believe depends on where you sit ideologically. The experts are more in tune with certain empirical facts—such as that, as campaign spending increases, so does voter turnout—but are wildly out of tune when it comes to the role campaign finance plays in the trust (or lack thereof) we have in the political system. Left-leaning elites think money is a crucial driver of mistrust, whereas right-leaning elites think it is peripheral at best. Although elites are routinely surveyed for their views, Primo and Milyo point out that seldom are elites asked about their personal ideology. This bit of information is revelatory.

I would recommend this book even if you are not interested in campaign finance, though it is unlikely you would have read to this point if that was the case. It does an excellent job of thoroughly explaining the formation of the research questions and their methodology. Each chapter has its own appendix so that advanced undergraduates and graduate students can see precisely how the analysis was done. This is especially helpful when reading the careful analysis of state campaign finance reforms and public opinion stagnation.

Primo and Milyo do not offer an alternative solution, but they do suggest that educating journalists would help relieve some of the “money as evil” mantra and that this mantra itself is a distraction. If I have any critique of this book, it is that they do not push us quite far enough. For example, if about 84% of Americans are employed by the private sector, why are we surprised that the private sector’s position in politics endures? How are candidates recruited and socialized? Is money what prevents the “average”

person from running? I suspect there is more to it. After you and your students read this book, I hope you will think more deeply about how bias is sustained in American democracy.

**Union by Law: Filipino American Labor Activists, Rights Radicalism, and Racial Capitalism.** By

Michael W. McCann with George I. Lovell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. 504p. \$105.00 cloth, \$35.00 paper.

**In the Name of Liberty: The Argument for Universal Unionization.** By Mark R. Reiff. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 417p. \$120.00 cloth.

doi:10.1017/S1537592721001754

— John Medearis , *University of California, Riverside*  
john.medearis@ucr.edu

When Silme Domingo and Michael Woo made their undercover investigative trip to four remote Alaska salmon canneries, nine years had passed since the 1964 Civil Rights Act. But the racially oppressive conditions they documented were not too different from what their fathers had experienced in such canneries, well before the “civil rights revolution.” The dirty, dangerous, and seasonal cannery jobs—performing subordinate roles, including butchering, sliming, sluicing, and egg pulling—were overwhelmingly held by Native Alaskan, Filipino American, and other Asian American workers, report Michael W. McCann and George I. Lovell in their rich and compelling new book, *Union by Law: Filipino American Labor Activists, Rights Radicalism, and Racial Capitalism*. In addition, these low-wage workers were relegated to segregated dining facilities and living quarters, the latter poorly insulated against the elements. The supervisors and workers on fishing boats, meanwhile, were predominantly white. Workers who challenged these exploitive practices were blacklisted.

In different ways, both McCann and Lovell and Mark R. Reiff, in his new book, *In the Name of Liberty: The Argument for Universal Unionization*, make clear why such conditions—why, in general, the structure and character of work—should be central to political inquiry and to studies of freedom and domination in a racially complex and deeply unequal society. Another significant and revealing similarity of the two books is that they each respond—in a distinctive way—to a “libertarian utopia” (Reiff’s term), an ideal narrative about free workers entering only into self-created, voluntary relationships untouched by enduring social relations of race, economic power, and legal disadvantage. The role that such a vision plays in these books—and the insights and oversights that follow from the way the authors choose to respond to it—make reading the books together rewarding. In McCann and Lovell’s book, the libertarian tale is at the heart of the Supreme Court majority’s opinion in *Wards Cove Packing*

*Co. v. Atonio* (1989), which denied that a group of cannery employees had provided sufficient evidence that racial inequities like the ones Domingo and Woo chronicled resulted from anything other than free, unbiased choice and adherence to legitimate business practices. The Court majority's position effectively squelched "disparate impact" analysis of workplace discrimination for a time. McCann and Lovell see that squelching as premised on a willful "erasure" of the historical origins of oppression in the canneries (p. 2). They seek to rectify the erasure with an account that shows exactly how the workplace order still in place in the 1970s was the lasting product of institutions, practices, and beliefs shaped by decades of US imperialism in the Philippines and interlocking legal and economic institutions that openly incorporated immigrants, Native Americans, and Blacks into US political and economic life on starkly unequal terms.

The utopia that provokes Reiff's book is a more self-consciously libertarian one, and its more explicit philosophical premises make it a good starting point for tracing out what these two books teach us about politics and political inquiry. As his title indicates, Reiff's book argues on the basis of a republican theory of liberty for universal unionization: union representation as a matter of right in every workplace, without the need for an organizing campaign and election. Reiff makes his case in three main essays, the first of which argues, counterintuitively, that unions would arise, on libertarian terms, in a libertarian ideal situation like the one described by Robert Nozick in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974). In particular, Reiff takes as his starting point the imaginary Nozickian situation in which voluntary interactions between free, rights-bearing individuals have led to the creation of a minimal state or, more precisely, to the rise of "dominant protective associations" (DPAs) that undertake to look after the lives, liberty, contracts, and property rights of all individuals within a region. Reiff claims, first, that a business landscape with large firms, much like what we observe in the real world, would arise in this libertarian utopia. Next, he argues that workers in those firms would seek to unionize simply to improve their bargaining power and to make use of specialist negotiators—and that there would be no libertarian justification for rights-protecting DPAs to prevent unionization, not even if these unions compelled nonmembers to join.

The next essay in Reiff's volume drops most (but not all) of the Nozickian apparatus to argue that unions are required to protect liberty—conceived in roughly republican terms—from the depredations of firms. Unions, Reiff, contends, should be seen as a "basic institution" of society, borrowing terminology from John Rawls. Reiff means by this that unions should be recognized as needed "to make the basic structure" of society "more likely to be just" (p. 80). This claim is premised on a particular republican understanding of liberty, "the right to be

free from interference by the arbitrary will of another" (p. 57), with Reiff giving the word "arbitrary" a distinctive meaning (p. 89).

For Reiff, this understanding of liberty is premised on the generally libertarian concept of "self-ownership" (pp. 56, 86). And his reliance on self-ownership clarifies the achievement of his book while also highlighting what we have to look for elsewhere in the quest to understand the politics of labor. Like many others, Reiff seems to regard "self-ownership" simply as an innocent way to express both commitment to individual autonomy and the rejection of domination. But staking freedom and autonomy on ownership and all that it entails is anything but innocent. To own something implies the right to transfer it to someone else. Yet there are some things we cannot (and others we ought not) simply transfer to someone else: a prime example is labor itself, a "fictitious commodity" in Karl Polanyi's words, something inextricably connected to our persons. Social interactions (like selling labor) that purport to be simple transfers of such things are often really something else: acts that produce or reproduce social relations of subordination, as Carole Pateman has argued. Those potentially oppressive social relations, far from being free creations of their producers and reproducers, often escape their intentions, a point to which I return in a moment.

Of course, the whole purpose of Reiff's book is to make the case for limiting the harm to freedom that can be done by employers through employment relations. Much of his book is a virtuosic demonstration of what can be argued for a more just economic order even from the standpoint of libertarian-friendly premises. (The third essay, defending public sector unionization, adopts more eclectic premises and ranges more broadly.) Reiff's case for universal unionization is a most welcome contribution when the existing labor-relations model in the United States seems broken, and work is undergoing a profound transformation, thanks to Uber and Door Dash.

Still, the way in which the actual oppressive character of labor relations often escapes the intentions and full awareness of many workers (and bosses) who reproduce them is clearer in McCann and Lovell's book. For this phenomenon is exactly what the Supreme Court majority opinion in *Wards Cove* overlooked or denied. By the time that Domingo and Woo made their research trip, hiring—the buying and selling of labor power for the canneries—was organized through union hiring halls. Yet the hiring halls in no way challenged the long-standing existence of completely separate recruitment channels for the canneries: one for the dangerous, low-wage work and another for supervisors, as McCann and Lovell point out (p. 227). And these institutionalized channels, especially the low-wage one, had hardly changed since being shaped over decades by the political economy of empire, race, and migrant labor.

To understand this shaping, it helps to consider the Filipino cannery workforce as it was in the early to mid-twentieth century: it was made up predominantly of migrant noncitizens, subjects of “imported colonialism,” exploited at work, discriminated against in their broader communities, and excluded from the promises of full and equal belonging (pp. 74, 370). This condition, in turn, can only be fully explained by pointing to the complex intersection of multiple historical institutions and forces. First, there is the long US imperial project in the Philippines, which institutionalized racial hierarchy on the islands, created landownership patterns that forced many Filipinos to migrate to the US metropole, and established the status Filipinos would experience when they did so—not as citizens but as “nationals,” as “colonial subjects bound by loyalty to American sovereign authority but allowed to travel within and among the territorial borders of the United States” (p. 78). (This is one example of a broader pattern: a US political and legal order historically shaped by racially distinct and unequal citizenship categories.) Then there is the growth of racism among white citizens and workers, which McCann and Lovell understand in part as a response to their declining status in a changing economy (p. 44). Finally, there is the hierarchical and oppressive order of the workplace itself, which the authors argue constitutes an exception to the supposedly ubiquitous free liberal American order (pp. 17, 132, 370). Running through their complex historical explanation of these phenomena is their understanding of law as contradictory and contested. On the one hand, the legal structures that supported empire, oppressive workplaces, and racialized citizenship show that the optimistic, liberal view of law—law viewed as correcting exceptional, private discriminatory practices—is profoundly partial.

Nevertheless, on the other hand, the contrasting view that law can be nothing but a tool of white capitalists is belied by another running theme of McCann and Lovell’s book: the legal mobilization and rights consciousness of immigrant cannery workers. The authors make the case that this consciousness, too, can only be understood historically, as developing over time. It had been shaped by a succession of experiences: legal struggles in the early twentieth century to overcome or bypass alien land laws that prevented many immigrants from owning and leasing farm plots (pp. 102–7); a wave of labor organizing in the canneries in the 1930s (pp. 119–59); and antiwar, anti-imperialist student organizing in the 1960s and 1970s (p. 231).

Although the Court put an untimely end to the cannery workers’ claims in the *Wards Cove* case, and thus at least temporarily hampered efforts to make creative use of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, McCann and Lovell insist that a crucial lesson of the episode is the ability of oppressed working people to develop and organize around innovative legal arguments and strategies. The potential of such

mobilization to reshape the social order is still another reason to heed the lesson of both these books about the need for political inquiry to keep labor in focus.

**Youth Who Trade Sex in the U.S.: Intersectionality, Agency, and Vulnerability.** By Carisa R. Showden and Samantha Majic. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018.

244p. \$92.50 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

doi:10.1017/S1537592721001365

— Jennifer Musto , Wellesley College  
jmusto@wellesley.edu

In their analytically rousing and comprehensive book, *Youth Who Trade Sex in the United States*, Carisa Showden and Samantha Majic provide a clear-eyed account of the dominant narratives that surround these social practices. The book deftly unpacks the glaring disconnect between the misconceptions reflected in well-intended policy characterizations of sex trafficking and the complex realities facing young people who trade sex, explaining how we got here, what ideas and assumptions inform public understanding, and the steps researchers and policy makers can take to change course. By excavating policy makers’, advocates’, media commentators’, and some researchers’ indefatigable attachment to “innocent girl–predatory man” (p. 19) narratives, Showden and Majic explain why public policy efforts and attendant frontline anti-trafficking interventions are not only inadequate but also ill equipped to address the structural inequalities that render youth vulnerable to exploitation in the first place.

All too often, policy discussions avoid meaningful conversations about the complexities surrounding young people who trade sex (p. 10). For instance, by singularly focusing on sex as exploitation, discussions about sex trafficking often eclipse more expansive conversations about structural vulnerabilities that contribute to the phenomenon. Similarly, despite extensive media coverage and teeming public interest in stories about young people in the sex trades, most narratives of sex trafficking rely on individualized stories and depict youth’s lives simplistically. By exploring the overlapping gendered, racial, economic, and sexual vulnerabilities that shape young people’s lived experience of agency and vulnerability, Showden and Majic provide a much-needed intersectional feminist analytical intervention rarely considered in either policy discussions or even some research on sex trafficking.

For students of law, policy, and American politics at the intersection of race and gender, it may seem incomprehensible that intersectional scholarship on young people in the sex trades in the United States is in such short supply. Unfortunately, this is still the case. Showden and Majic explain why, despite the existence of some well-designed empirical studies on the topic featuring “a range of genders, ages, races, and sexualities,” a “dominant gendered