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Contents

Introduction by Stacie E. Goddard, Wellesley College	2
Review by Dale C. Copeland, University of Virginia	5
Review by Joseph M. Parent, University of Notre Dame	9
Review by Kenneth A. Schultz, Stanford University	11
Review by Bartholomew H. Sparrow, The University of Texas at Austin.....	15
Response by Richard W. Maass, Old Dominion University	22

INTRODUCTION BY STACIE E. GODDARD, WELLESLEY COLLEGE

In 1895 Henry Cabot Lodge declared that the United States had compiled “a record of conquest, colonization, and territorial expansion unequalled by any people in the 19th century.”¹ Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States, motivated by a potent mixture of security, economic, and ideological motives, pushed westward, subjugating once sovereign Native tribes and dismantling European empires on the North American continent. But, as Richard Maass argues, while U.S. expansion was vast in scope, Americans often left valuable territory on the table. He argues that, even when annexation would have been profitable, democracy and xenophobia—more often than not, outright racism—blocked the United States from claiming territory. American leaders could not envision conquering land without incorporating it as a state; European imperial arrangements were illegitimate. At the same time, if politicians believed that annexation would either weaken their political influence, or “worsen” their political (white) identity, annexation was impossible.

Maass illustrates his argument in 23 instances of debates surrounding annexation from 1774 to 1898. In each case he uses a combination of primary and secondary sources to trace U.S. leaders’ decisions to support or oppose annexing territory. At times, their decisions were rooted in fears about political influence in the country, or what Maass calls fears of “weakening.” Opposition to annexing Florida, for example, was driven by “northern leaders...fear that the acquisition would weaken their domestic political positions (60). At others, American leaders opposed annexation because they could not imagine granting citizenship to Natives and non-whites. If the United States could not flood a territory with white settlers, ensuring their dominance, then its leaders would rather not touch the territory at all.

All four of the reviewers in this roundtable commend Maass for a theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich account of American expansionism. As Joseph Parent argues, “the book works as history as much as political science, and is the most readable account of American annexation I have come across. It deserves to appear on syllabi and be cited liberally.” While the history of American expansion he tells might not be new, Maass has, as Dale Copeland writes, provided “something missing in the standard accounts of nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism: namely, a theoretically-informed logic for when the American state would push hard for expansion, as with most of the West, and when it would hold back for fear of changing the domestic nature of the polity through the incorporation of individuals seen as unable to absorb American political and social values.” The reviewers all note the timeliness of Maass’s book, at a time when both Americans more broadly and Americans within academia more specifically are driven to examine race in politics. Such analyses have been sadly missing in much of the scholarship on international relations; for that reason alone, Maass’s attention to race and expansion, makes it a significant contribution to the field.

As with any valuable academic work, the reviewers here push Maass on both his theoretical framework and empirical research. First, there is the question of contingency in Maass’s argument. Maass, as both Sparrow and Schultz argue, nicely demonstrates that the pace and extent of American expansionism was contingent, and depended on the “particular constellation of political power at the time that opportunities arose” (Schultz). But at times, contingency seems to go deeper than Maass’s argument suggests and that, as Parent argues, Maass’s “perfect explanatory success gives the mistaken impression that the most powerful actors were prisoners of necessity, while his case studies strongly suggest a greater role for contingency.” For example, Copeland notes that two of his cases of annexation—the Alaska in 1867 and Hawai’i in 1898—could have gone either way, given the “substantial opposition to formal annexation.”

The reviewers also push Maass to delve into the agency of other actors, especially those who were most poised to raise the cost of annexation through resistance. As Sparrow notes, after 1898 resistance in the Philippines led to several years of bloody and brutal counter-insurgency fighting, which surely shaped U.S. views of the costs of annexation. After Mexico’s war with the United States, its leaders refused to accept compensation over its lost territories as a sign that it refused to

¹ Henry Cabot Lodge, “Our Blundering Foreign Policy,” *The Forum* XIX (March 1895): 8-17.

recognize the legitimacy of American actions. There could be no doubt about what further expansion into Mexico would bring.

Likewise, the reviewers also point to the role of great power politics in Maass's account, not as a competitor to his domestic story, but as a structural condition that shaped American decisions. As Schultz puts it, "the decision not to annex leaves the foresworn territory governed by someone else. Any decision about annexation requires consideration of the costs and benefits of leaving the neighbor intact and in control (or diminished, but still independent)." In the case of Hawai'i, as Copeland argues, racist arguments against annexing Hawai'i seemed to win the day in American politics, until Hawai'i seemed to become a target of Japan's increasing expansion in the late nineteenth century. As Copeland argues, while race was critical in explaining U.S. hesitancy to expand, the final decision seems moved more by great power competition than by domestic politics.

Finally, the reviewers—Sparrow in particular—raise questions about Maass's focus on annexation and, more specifically, his argument that the United States eschewed the formal European imperial arrangements as inconsistent with democracy. As Sparrow argues, many of the United States arrangements were in practice hybrid systems that incorporated elements of both annexation and imperialism. Most of the territories eventually annexed into the United States entered first as administered territories, not full-fledged states. And even today the United States retains hybrid imperial relations with territories like Puerto Rico and Guam. Indeed one underexplored question in Maass's book—perhaps outside the scope of it—is the wide variation in U.S. governance over its acquired territories.

In general, the questions the reviewers raise are of critical importance, both to our understanding of American expansion and international relations theory more generally. Maass is to be congratulated for producing a book that pushes forward these significant debates.

Participants:

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Stacie E. Goddard is the Mildred Lane Kemper Professor of Political Science and the Paula Phillips Bernstein '58 Faculty Director of the Madeleine K. Albright Institute at Wellesley College. Her book, *Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy: Jerusalem and Northern Ireland*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2010. Her articles have appeared in outlets such as *International Organization*, *International Security*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *International Theory*, *Security Studies*, as well as in the *New York Times*. Her most recent book is *When Right Makes Might: Rising Powers and World Order* (Cornell University Press, 2018).

Dale Copeland is professor of international relations at the Department of Politics, University of Virginia. His recent book, *Economic Interdependence and War* (Princeton University Press, 2015) was awarded the best book of 2017 by the International Studies Association.

Joseph M. Parent is professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame. He is co-author (with Paul K. MacDonald) of *Twilight of the Titans: Great Power Decline and Retrenchment* (Cornell University Press, 2018), (with Joseph Uscinski) *American Conspiracy Theories* (Oxford University Press, 2014), and author of *Uniting States: Voluntary Union in World Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Kenneth Schultz is professor of political science at Stanford University. He is the author of *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), co-author of *World Politics: Interests, Interactions, and Institutions* (W.W. Norton & Co., 4th ed., 2019), as well as articles in scholarly journals, including *International Organization*, the *Journal of*

Conflict Resolution, World Politics, and the American Journal of Political Science. He received his PhD from Stanford University in 1996.

Bartholomew Sparrow is the author of *The Strategist: Brent Scowcroft and the Call of National Security* (2015), *The Insular Cases and the Emergence of American Empire* (PublicAffairs, 2006), and *From the Outside In: World War II and the American State* (Princeton University Press, 1996). He is a professor of Government at The University of Texas at Austin and a nonresident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security.

REVIEW BY DALE C. COPELAND, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

In an age when a U.S. president, from the party of Lincoln no less, can regularly employ racist language to mobilize his base, Richard Maass has written a surprisingly timely book about the forces behind nineteenth-century American expansionism. Maass shows effectively that the United States picked areas for annexation that its leaders knew would eventually be overwhelmed by white settlers, while avoiding the incorporation of territories that would always have a majority of non-white subjects. Maass acknowledges that policymakers needed to believe that a new territory would have to offer long-term benefits to the nation in either economic or strategic terms before being allowed to become part of the United States. But this criterion was only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for any formal annexation that held out the promise of eventual statehood. The territory would also need to have either a very small non-white native population (as with the areas in “the West” such as California and Oregon in 1846-1848) or have a native population that would eventually be overwhelmed by the internal immigration of whites from the core existing states (as with Hawai’i). Acquisitions with a large population of non-whites, such as the Philippines and Puerto Rico after the war with Spain in 1898, might be held for their strategic benefits. But they would never be permitted to move toward statehood. In short, xenophobic racism acted as a major constraint on the extent of formal U.S. expansionism, even when a territory’s benefits might otherwise suggest that it should form a part of the larger ‘empire of liberty.’ The fact that in 2020, President Donald Trump reportedly considered *selling* Puerto Rico, after having denied the island critical aid following a devastating hurricane, only shows that highly racialized views of ‘what it means to be American’ are still with us, despite generations of efforts to improve race relations within the United States.

I should admit upfront that I find this book a difficult one to critique, for the simple reason that I agree with so much of its argument and historical research. To be sure, aspects of the argument are not terribly new. Historians of American foreign policy have long understood that U.S. leaders often restrained their own expansionist impulses for fear of absorbing peoples who did not understand American values and might always constitute a majority of the population of the new territory.¹ Consider the most obvious example. In 1847-1848 during the war with Mexico, the Americans had taken Mexico City and could have annexed pretty much the whole country had they so desired. By taking only the relatively unpopulated territories of northern Mexico, Washington made clear that eventual white domination of new territories was a key condition for formal annexation. Maass’s book clearly builds on the insights of historians. Yet also provides something missing in the standard accounts of nineteenth-century U.S. imperialism: namely, a theoretically-informed logic for when the American state would push hard for expansion, as with most of the West, and when it would hold back for fear of changing the domestic nature of the polity through the incorporation of individuals seen as unable to absorb American political and social values. Beyond its theoretical value, however, the book provides detailed documentary support for its argument across almost all the major cases of expansion in the nineteenth century. Maass is thus able to show the common threads linking events across a century of U.S. foreign policy. He reveals that debates on annexation almost always revolved around the tension between the economic/strategic benefits of annexation and the domestic costs of bringing in peoples that might dilute the white Anglo-Saxon foundation of the American polity. When the latter was stronger than the former, formal annexation would typically be rejected in favor of mere occupation and control.

Instead of going after Maass’s main thesis, with which I largely agree, I will offer three points that allow us to question how perfectly the thesis explains the historical cases and whether we need, in future work, to explore additional conditions to explain certain empirical anomalies. The first and broadest issue is whether Maass has provided a theoretical framework that is falsifiable. He notes that his argument builds on the “profitability” thesis drawn from realism that says states should expand when the economic and strategic benefits of expansion are greater than the material costs (38-39, 202). And in all the positive cases of annexation, Maass shows that leaders did indeed see benefits greater than costs. Yet in the negative cases where newly acquired territories were not formally incorporated, Maass can show that the *domestic* costs of annexation were

¹ Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York: Knopf, 1963); Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); Eric T.L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

seen as unacceptable, despite the economic and strategic benefits. In essence, the *propelling* forces behind Maass's argument may be structural and realist, but the *constraining* forces that keep states from acting in a fully realist sense are at the unit level.²

This is a very useful addendum to the structural worldview. Maass shows why some democracies may be less expansionist than their power and circumstances might otherwise predict—yet not because of liberal inhibitions against using force but because of racist thinking that makes them disinclined to expand the franchise to ‘foreign’ peoples. This is all well and good. But the problem of potential non-falsifiability comes in when we face cases of acquisition where the non-white population in a territory was significant and where heated debate reveals that a substantial group of Americans feared that there would not be enough white immigration into the territory to allow it to become dominated by Anglo-Saxons. Alaska 1867 and Hawai'i 1898, both of which are covered in the book, are the two main examples here. In both cases, Maass shows that there was substantial opposition to formal annexation since that implied eventual statehood. It is clear from Maass's evidence that these two cases could have gone either way. If they had become negative cases, as with the Philippines 1898, then Maass could have pointed to all the opposition and argued that his ‘domestic costs’ argument proved superior to the realpolitik logic of grabbing when benefits are high. But since both Alaska and Hawai'i proved to be positive cases, he contends that contemporary arguments that whites would eventually become majorities in both territories proved decisive in removing the constraining effect of apparently high domestic costs, at least in the short term (chapters 5 and 7). Given that Maass's argument accepts and incorporates the theory it is going up against, namely, the realist “profitability” thesis (39), in certain cases it is very hard to predict which aspect of Maass's theory—the domestic-cost logic that constrains, or the profitability logic that propels—is going to have more causal salience in the moment of decision. There will then be a tendency for a researcher to evaluate the relative weighting of the two aspects by what he or she knows happened in terms of the dependent variable.

This seems to be how Maass proceeds with these two cases. With Hawai'i in particular, he provides a huge amount of evidence for opposition to annexation on racial grounds in 1898, arguments that had proved decisive in the majority's rejection of annexation in the 1893-1897 period. So why the switch in 1898? It seems that fears of Japan's annexation of the islands, tied to fears of European powers scrambling for the markets of East Asia, gave Hawai'i much more evident strategic value in 1898 than earlier in the decade (181-89). Can we not, in this case, just rely on the realpolitik explanation, and say that it was doing most of the causal heavy-lifting? Maass can point to some arguments in 1898 that suggested that the 103,000 non-whites on the islands would eventually be overwhelmed by white immigration, but in 1898 there were only some 6,700 whites (187), so such arguments seem weak relative to the strategic need the islands so nicely filled. In short, knowledge of the result on the dependent variable can allow him to argue that the domestic costs of annexation were not seen as too high. But had Hawai'i been rejected again in 1898, as it had been earlier, he could argue that the domestic costs were still too high.

A better approach, I would contend, would have been to simply state that his ‘domestic impact theory’ doesn't always work, and then explore the conditions under which the realpolitik aspect of his logic causally overrides the domestic cost aspect. As it stands, the book has no cases that *don't* support his argument (200-201). If this is the result of the implicit measuring of causal salience on the independent variable side by what transpires on the dependent variable side, then this is a problem. Let me be clear: I believe Maass has introduced a highly valuable corrective to structural realism and shown that in most of the cases the domestic costs of expansion were indeed very important to the final decision. And empirically he has made a notably strong case for his domestic impact theory. Yet he does not need to push it too far, and in cases such as Alaska and Hawai'i, I think that the argument would have been better served by the admission that the perceived domestic costs were overridden by strategic objectives. In future work, Maass's theory can be further developed by specifying the conditions under which structural circumstances will be likely to overwhelm domestic concerns.

² On the role of propelling versus constraining forces within arguments that employ multiple causal variables, see Dale C. Copeland, *Economic Interdependence and War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 72-74.

This initial discussion leads to a second issue, namely, the downplayed question of why certain territories eventually became states, while others stayed mere territories. The Oklahoma territory, for example, was designed after 1830 to serve as a depository for Indian tribes that white southerners wanted to remove from around the country, especially in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. Clearly there was never any prospect of statehood for the Indians who were forced to move to Oklahoma along the infamous Trail of Tears. Yet Oklahoma eventually achieved statehood seven decades later (1907), once it was clear that the white settlers to the region had overwhelmed the remaining Indian groups in numbers. Maass's logic can be employed to explain such results quite effectively. Yet there is the issue of Louisiana's incorporation into the United States in 1812 despite American leaders' long-standing reluctance to consider absorbing French-speaking Québec into the union. Maass does a good job of showing that the Americans feared incorporating the large and predominantly Catholic population of Québec into the union during the War of 1812. But why were U.S. leaders eager not only to take the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803, but allow the immediate area around New Orleans to become the *state* of Louisiana in 1812, only eight years after its large Catholic population was absorbed by the deal with Napoleon?

Maass does not discuss Louisiana's move to statehood in 1812 (of course no book can cover everything). Yet it is worth remembering that President Thomas Jefferson initially imposed martial law on the city of New Orleans and its surrounding areas, and there was great fear that the French and Spanish-speaking Catholics of the region were unable to ever become 'Americans' in the political and cultural sense. And to make matters worse, the population was large (with New Orleans being the largest city in the South at the time). Thus the fascinating puzzle that no scholar, to my knowledge, has explored: why would Louisiana be granted statehood *in the very same year* that Québec was invaded by American troops, even though U.S. leaders saw Québec only as a bargaining chip to get Britain to end its trade restrictions? With so many similarities in conditions, why the different behavior? The answer seems obvious: President James Madison, like Jefferson, had been obsessed with the free flow of trade through New Orleans since the 1780s and its importance to keeping the western states in the union. Québec, on the other hand, had little strategic or economic value. Keeping the Catholic Louisianans happy by granting statehood overrode east-coast concerns about their non-Anglo-Saxon political heritage.

My larger point here is that Maass's theory can go further than simply explaining when the United States in the nineteenth century sought to annex or not annex a newly occupied territory. As it stands, his argument is mostly of historical value, since clearly today no great power would see imperialism as having economic benefits greater than costs.³ But if the deeper argument he is making involves the way strategic benefits interacted with the domestic costs shaped by ethnocentrism, then Maass's book has something important to say about issues of the twenty-first century such as the future of Puerto Rico as well as legal immigration from Latin America. It can be used to predict that Puerto Rico, despite its annexation in 1898, will never move beyond its current 'in-between' status. Its residents may be American citizens and may be able to vote in primaries and national elections, but they will never be granted statehood for the island as long as racial attitudes within the United States are not changed. And if the electoral politics of 2020 are any indication, these attitudes are not likely to shift for the foreseeable future. This means that immigration from Central America will also be restricted in ways designed to protect a narrow, ethnocentric definition of what it means to be an American.

My third and final point concerns the question of how the book's argument might be enhanced and extended in future research, beyond simply the point that Maass needs to specify the conditions under which domestic costs will have less salience than strategic and economic questions. My main suggestion here would be the development of a more defined understanding of the role of the executive branch versus the role of the legislature and regional bodies in the specification of "domestic costs." Empirically we can certainly identify times when executive power overrode concerns emanating from the legislative branch or state leaders, leading to occupations and even annexations despite opposition. President William McKinley and his officials were primarily responsible for the taking of Guam and the Philippines in 1898. These were surprise acquisitions for a country thinking the war with Spain was only about Cuba. But the fact that Commodore George Dewey was authorized to take the valuable port of Manila immediately upon the declaration of war, and that Dewey had

³ Maass is right to say that the American penchant for "informal" imperialism after 1945 is to some degree due to the restraining effect of his domestic-cost logic (205-206). But this behavior is highly overdetermined: with the rise of nationalism and the effectiveness of insurgent warfare after the Second World War, all great powers have learned that formal imperialism no longer pays.

succeeded in his task many weeks before Spanish forces in Cuba were even engaged, suggests that executive planning for strategic expansion can go forward even if elites in the legislature or at the state level have reservations for domestic or ideological reasons. On the other hand, as we see with the filibuster movement against Central America and the Caribbean in the 1850s, American efforts to expand the boundaries of the nation can be motivated by regional drives that are opposed at home by state officials that have little interest in *certain types* of expansion. In the 1850s, the issue at hand, of course, was slavery's expansion. Many southerners seriously contemplated the acquisition and incorporation of Cuba, Nicaragua, and other territories in the Caribbean region because they could become future slave states that would counter the expected growth of free-soil states in the west. Here domestic costs of the kind Maass focuses on were less important than the domestic *benefits*, especially in terms of control of the Senate, that led many in the South to seek expansion. And with northern Democrats such as James Buchanan sympathetic to such Caribbean expansionism, if only to keep his *party* in power, it seems clear that Maass's logic would be enhanced by looking at the fuller impact of expansion—both in terms of costs as well as benefits—for the specific regional and partisan interest groups of the country.

To conclude, Richard Maass's *The Picky Eagle* is a major contribution to both international relations and historical literature. He has offered a new theory that combines structural and domestic-level variables into one coherent explanation for both the impulses to U.S. expansion and the restraints upon it. Since I agree with so much of the book's analysis and findings, my purpose in this critique has been a positive one: to suggest ways to improve Maass's theory to ensure its falsifiability and to allow scholars to better specify the conditions under which it is likely to work. This will help researchers extend the argument to other interesting historical puzzles, such as Louisiana's fast-tracked incorporation as a state by 1812, and to theoretical questions such as why Puerto Rico and Guam are unlikely to ever be granted full political equality within the union. The book can also help general readers of history rethink the racial biases that underpinned America's development from thirteen states along the eastern seaboard to a global superpower, and whether the questions of race relations and immigration that the 2020 election have brought to the surface can ever be resolved effectively without a major shift in American 'historical consciousness'—how the United States got to this point, who Americans are now, and where they should go from here.

REVIEW BY JOSEPH M. PARENT, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

In the aptly titled *Picky Eagle: How Democracy and Xenophobia Limited U.S. Territorial Expansion*, Richard Maass argues that democracy and xenophobia limited U.S. annexations because domestic institutions and preferences increasingly blocked even profitable acquisitions. He calls his logic ‘domestic impact theory’ and compares it to profitability theory, testing them both against 23 instances of annexation and near-annexation from 1774 to 1898 (and a little beyond), all of which are examined through in-depth case studies. The headline findings are that profitability theory correctly predicts 13 of the 23 cases, but the preponderance of evidence never favors it, while domestic impact theory correctly predicts all the cases and the preponderance of evidence favors it in 15 of the 23 cases (200-201).

Overall, it is a winning work. Maass is a clear thinker and a clear writer, and he makes a compelling case. A major factor in the book’s persuasiveness is its investigation of primary sources from many perspectives. Indeed, the book works as history as much as political science, and is the most readable account of American annexation I have come across. It deserves to appear on syllabi and be cited liberally. Readers get a real sense of the uncertainty that surrounds annexation, and what it looked like to leaders and citizens around the country.

One of the core contributions of *The Picky Eagle* is that it brings a nuanced understanding of how race and elections interacted with international relations to create American borders. It could be considered something of a companion to Anthony Marx’s *Making Race and Nation* and a cousin to Daniel Posner’s *Institutions and Ethnic Politics in Africa*.¹ The cases are often heart-wrenching: principled politicians like George Washington and John Quincy Adams, failing to stem the tide of unscrupulous settlers and greedy speculators; genuine altruism toward foreign people, such as toward Cubans in Spanish concentration camps, giving way to brutal selfishness in Cuba and the Philippines; and a steady swamp of racism across the political spectrum, dehumanizing others seemingly regardless of expedience.

As is often the case, the strengths of the book are tied to its weaknesses. Immersion in U.S. perspectives crowd out others. It is a stretch to liken the fourth most massive state in the world to a picky eater, but that analogy resonates from an American angle. The United States was not restrained in its expansion, and history suggests that the country was never penalized for the few times it exercised restraint. It makes sense to focus on the United States; it is the dominant actor in producing the outcome of interest. Yet this can be pushed too far, and non-Americans can be deprived of agency and influence. This applies as much to non-great powers, like Native Americans and Mexicans, who could complicate U.S. strategies, as to great powers, such as Britain, France, and Germany, whose ideologies shaped American preferences. Meanwhile, large numbers of immigrants settled unevenly through the country, affecting what xenophobia meant over time and how politicians felt about assimilation,² a part of the picture that goes mostly overlooked.

In his model, Maass takes U.S. preferences as given. Fair enough, one has to start somewhere. But as the examples above suggest, U.S. preferences shifted over more than a century. Anglo-Saxonism is the ideology that appears most frequently in Maass’s account, but that is a cloudy ideology of indeterminate influence. Who counted as “American” or “white” was inconsistent. At various times, Americans considered peoples foreign because of a shifting combination of their melanin, morals, religion, language, health, history, and bank balance. Maass’s cases show these shifts, but they do not explain them. There is more work to be done unpacking why politicians chose to accentuate some identities over others when building coalitions to support sundry policies (and why others believed them).

¹ Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Daniel N. Posner, *Ethnic Politics and Institutions in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² Aristide Zolberg, *A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Knowledge grows, in part, like economies do: by overselling. Maass never slips his evidentiary leash, but he strains it. His arguments are quite good, but any theory that explains *every* case, and explains them at least as well as any rival argument, is closer to theology than theory. I think it is true that Maass explains the cases better than Fareed Zakaria, whose *From Wealth to Power* covers the same topic,³ but not *that* well. For instance, Maass points out that the British defense of Canada was often meager (93), and the United States could have overwhelmed it at multiple points. Yet British forces in Canada were tripwire forces, which could have triggered more, and the enduring British threat to the United States was coastal raiding.⁴ Furthermore, Maass's perfect explanatory success gives the mistaken impression that the most powerful actors were prisoners of necessity, while his case studies strongly suggest a greater role for contingency.

The crux of this problem is the difficulty in separating democracy and xenophobia from military and economic factors. For example, as the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War showed, the anti-slavery moralism of the North lined up with its socioeconomic interests just as much as the pro-slavery morality of the South lined up with its socioeconomic interests. Did the military-economic ledger drive views on race, was it the other way around, or both?

In the conclusion, Maass notes that his theory is not uniquely American and that "Globalization, escalating costs of major war, and other recent developments may be pushing in the same direction, but this book gives us reason to suspect that those modern economic and military transformations may be reinforcing a trend that was already under way for political reasons" (209-210). However, without international comparisons, that cannot be demonstrated. European states seem to have followed similar trajectories despite different domestic politics. Tsarist Russia had no problem annexing foreign peoples for centuries, but it slowed down before American annexation did. Israel is certainly capable of taking and holding lots of territory, but that has not had the domestic or international payoffs of American annexations.

These are the vistas that Maass's book opens up. The conquest calculus is complicated; so are the people trying to divine it. There were pretty hefty payoffs to greed, hypocrisy, and oppression, but who embraced them varied quite a bit. Nor is there a clear moral, or at least a consistent one: sometimes the bad guys won because they were wrong, sometimes the good guys won because they were right. The Declaration of Independence did not stand in the way of ethnic cleansing Native Americans, but it helped stand in the way of ethnic cleansing other groups. People face tough incentives, but still have room for meaningful choice. Fundamentally, Maass's book is a thoughtful meditation on the political problem *par excellence*: who is an outsider and how should we treat them?

³ Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁴ Kenneth Bourne, *Britain and the Balance of Power in North America, 1815-1908* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

When President Donald Trump implausibly suggested in August 2019 that the United States should purchase Greenland, he was bucking history in more ways than one. Not only has Greenland been moving toward greater independence over the past decade, but the practice of buying sovereignty over territory has been defunct for some time. The last such purchase was in 1917, when the United States bought the Danish West Indies for \$25 million. And those islands, now the U.S. Virgin Islands, were never incorporated into the U.S. homeland. You have to go back five additional years to find the last time the United States formally incorporated a piece of territory, the Alaska Territory in 1912.

As Richard Maass notes at the outset of *The Picky Eagle*, the end of American territorial expansion presents an interesting puzzle. The United States stopped growing territorially at around the same time that it burst onto the world stage as a major power. Territorial expansion preceded, and arguably helped fuel, the United States' rise as a global power but then, curiously, ended once that status had been obtained. Given that rising power is often thought to generate rising ambition, this anomaly demands explanation.

Maass argues that the domestic political effects of incorporating new territory—and, crucially, the people that reside thereon—make annexation costly. Even if territory might be profitable to obtain, political leaders might forego the gains due to two concerns, which Maass calls “weakening” and “worsening” (24). Weakening refers to the effect that admitting new citizens can have on the relative strength of existing political parties or factions. For example, those in slave states feared that the addition of territory in Canada would weaken their relative power, while those in non-slave states had similar concern about the admission of Florida and Texas. Worsening refers to the concern that admitting people who differ racially, ethnically, or culturally from the rest of the country would dilute or alter the national identity, particularly when that identity has an ethnic basis. Both of these concerns, Maass argues, loom particularly large in democratic countries, where there are expectations that inhabitants of annexed lands would enjoy political representation and constraints on the state's ability to engage in large-scale displacement or extermination.¹

At a minimum, these considerations mean that annexation can generate conflict along partisan or factional lines between winners and losers. More dramatically, they can lead to territorial abstinence: refusal to annex territories even if they could be taken at low cost. In the American case, Maass argues, concerns about weakening and worsening led to a preference for sparsely populated areas whose “demographic future was malleable” (107)—such as the Louisiana Purchase or Hawai'i—over more densely populated areas in which the “alien” (9) populations that resided there would be more challenging to assimilate or overwhelm—such as Québec or the Philippines. A telling example comes from the debate that took place in 1848 over how much territory to take in the aftermath of the decisive victory over Mexico. While there were some who called for the annexation of all of Mexico, along with its considerable resource wealth, concerns about the political effects of incorporating a large Mexican population led to acceptance of a boundary that, in the words of the *Louisville Democrat*, offered “not the best boundary, but all of the territory of value we can get without taking the people” (144).

Although the idea that there are costs to territorial expansion is not entirely new,² *The Picky Eagle* breaks important ground in fleshing out the “domestic impact theory” (23), drawing explicit contrasts with the most prominent alternative—what

¹ The caveat “large scale” matters here, since the United States had no problem displacing and annihilating the Native American tribes, as Maass notes (chapter 4). He argues, however, that this option was not available for more densely populated areas, such as Cuba or the Philippines.

² See, for example, Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spolaore, *The Size of Nations* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003); Stephen M. Saideman and R. William Ayres, *For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Kenneth A. Schultz and Henk E. Goemans, “Aims, Claims, and the Bargaining Model of War,” *International Theory* 11:3 (November 2019): 344-374, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971919000071>.

Maass calls “profitability theory” (26)—and applying it in sustained way to the history of American territorial expansion in the nineteenth century. In addition to being of considerable historical importance, the American case provides a particularly good test for these competing theories, since the United States faced few external constraints on its expansion.

The result is an impressive work of theoretically informed historical analysis. Not only does the argument provide an important corrective to the idea that states try to maximize territory subject only to external constraints, but it also complicates claims that territorial restraint is a relatively recent, i.e., post-1945, development arising from changes in military technology and economic globalization.³ Maass’s argument also highlights the contingency involved in defining the country’s borders. Since annexation creates winners and losers, the outcome depended on the particular constellation of political power at the time that opportunities arose. For example, President Thomas Jefferson’s dominant position after 1800 allowed him to bulldoze Federalist opposition to the Louisiana Purchase (56). Similarly, the Texas annexation passed because John Tyler, a Virginia Democrat who succeeded to the presidency after being elected on the Whig ticket, was willing to circumvent opposition as a lame duck by resorting to a constitutionally questionable joint resolution, thereby lowering the threshold for passage (132). In addition, Maass makes the incisive observation that limits on American conquest came not from virtuous intentions or liberal principles, but from self-interest, racism, and xenophobia (204-207). In this, he echoes a point made vividly by the historian John D.P. Fuller, who remarked on the role of slave-state Senators in resisting the effort to annex Mexico that

those who feel that the absorption of Mexico in 1848 would have meant permanent injury to the best interests of the United States, should be extremely grateful to those slaveholders. To them not a little credit is due for the fact that Mexico is to-day an independent nation.⁴

As this observation suggests, there are aspects to this story that are distinctly American—in particular, the way in which slavery created concerns that new territories would affect the sectional balance of power. But the theory is general and by no means one of American exceptionalism. Hence, it is instructive to think about how these dynamics have played out elsewhere. Doing so raises what I see as friendly amendments that enrich Maass’s theory and help situate the U.S. case in broader context.

The core logic is familiar to observers of Israeli politics, who often speak of a trilemma around three values—land, democracy, and Jewish identity—of which Israel can only have two.⁵ In particular, annexing Palestinian-inhabited portions of the West Bank would require Israel to either deprive Palestinians of full representation or risk the Jewish identity of the state. This trilemma has not, of course, eliminated the demand for annexation; instead, it has led many on the right to question the importance of democracy or to devise ways to limit Palestinians’ political rights (including proposals to allow Palestinians to vote in Jordanian, rather than Israeli, elections, or in local, but not national, elections).⁶ This observation suggests that regime type, which is taken as a constant in Maass’s theory, is in fact not a fixed constraint, but something that

³ See, for example, Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 23, 125, 132; Stephen G. Brooks, *Producing Security: Multinational Corporations, Globalization, and the Changing Calculus of Conflict*, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Erik Gartzke and Dominic Rohner, “The Political Economy of Imperialism, Decolonization and Development,” *British Journal of Political Science* 41:3 (2011): 525-556.

⁴ John Fuller, “The Slavery Question and the Movement to Acquire Mexico, 1846-1848,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 21:1 (1934): 31-48, 48, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1896402>.

⁵ See, for example, Thomas L. Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1990), 253; Natan Sachs, *End Game: Does Israel Have a Plan?* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2021).

⁶ For a summary of different visions of annexation from the Israeli right, see [Carolina Landsmann](#), “How Israeli Right-wing Thinkers Envision the Annexation of the West Bank,” *Ha’aretz*, 18 August 2018, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/premium/MAGAZINE-how-israeli-right-wing-thinkers-envision-the-west-bank-s-annexation-1.6387108>, accessed 5 August 2020.

can itself become contested and, if necessary, sacrificed. American democracy has long incorporated—even depended on—all sorts of restrictions on the political representation of disfavored groups, suggesting there would have been ways to bring in ‘alien’ people while reducing their political impact. Thus, the story of the United States’ limited territorial ambition is also a story about the preservation of a flawed democracy against even deeper assaults.

Other cases remind us that the dynamic of territorial abstinence can manifest in non-democracies as well. Even Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler, the archetype of a leader with an insatiable appetite, was a picky eater. The empire that Hitler built from 1938-1941 was a patchwork of different forms of direct and indirect rule, with some conquered places annexed into Germany proper (Austria, Sudetenland, East Prussia, Luxembourg) or governed by a civil administration (Netherlands, Norway), still others were ruled indirectly as protectorates (Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia), and others were allowed nominal independence (Slovakia and Croatia). When Belgium and France fell, Hitler annexed previously lost territories (Eupen and Malmady, Alsace and Lorraine) and put the remainder under military occupation. To some extent, this pickiness reflect military and diplomatic needs of the time, and we do not know exactly what would have happened if Germany had won the war. Hitler was also freer to engage in large-scale displacement and extermination, as his plans for Poland and the Soviet Union attest. But these decisions also reflected Hitler’s desire to create an ethnically pure German state, which meant that “alien people” would be awkward to bring into Germany proper.⁷

Soviet leader Josef Stalin was also picky. At the end of World War II, with the Red Army sitting astride much of Central and Eastern Europe, the USSR made relatively limited additions to its own territory: eastern Poland (though less than it had received in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact), Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina from Romania (territories it had previously taken in 1940), and Transcarpathia from Czechoslovakia. In choosing which lands to annex, Stalin was partly constrained by concerns about provoking American and British opposition. But his underlying plans seem to have been driven by a nationalist principle to reclaim lands that had historically been Ukrainian, White Russian, and Moldovan.⁸ As for the rest, Stalin chose to rule indirectly, allowing these countries independence under military occupation and Soviet-installed Communist regimes.⁹

These cases raise another consideration: the decision not to annex leaves the foresworn territory governed by someone else. Any decision about annexation requires consideration of the costs and benefits of leaving the neighbor intact and in control (or diminished, but still independent). To the extent that a state has preferences over its neighbors’ foreign policies and domestic stability, the attractiveness of territorial abstinence depends on the availability and desirability of other strategies of influence, such as indirect rule or the installation of a new leaders or different political institutions.¹⁰ For example, the benefits of leaving a buffer state ruled through local proxies must be weighed against the costs of imperfect control. Conventional arguments often gloss over these distinctions, lumping both direct and indirect rule under the heading of “territorial control.”¹¹ But doing so sidesteps the fact that the leaders clearly cared about these distinctions and were not indifferent between these alternative forms. Hitler and Stalin were not, of course, concerned that the incorporation of conquered people would weaken them politically; rather, their choices reflected ideological projects that would have been

⁷ Mark Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 60.

⁸ Erik van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 232–233.

⁹ Stalin, like Hitler, was constrained not just by domestic considerations but also international ones. He might have made larger claims on Poland, for example, but had to be wary of provoking Allied response. The virtue of the American case, as Maass notes, is that the United States has a relatively free hand, allowing him to isolate domestic from international constraints.

¹⁰ For an argument about how states choose between territorial gains or regime change in the aftermath of war, see Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, ed., *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), chap. 9.

¹¹ Maass similarly rejects the lumping of annexations and spheres of influence under a single concept of territorial control, 6.

worsened, in Maass's terminology. Moreover, these choices can be deeply consequential in the long-run: the territories annexed by Stalin remain to this day as parts of the former Soviet republics of Ukraine and Moldova, while the satellite states that were occupied and ruled indirectly eventually escaped from that condition and regained full independence.

Finally, it is instructive to think about the opposite of annexation: the voluntary shedding of territory. If annexation creates losers domestically, why do we not see those decisions reversed if and when the losers obtain power? More broadly, if states sometimes say no to territory they could profitably annex for free, why do governments rarely let go of territory that they see as weakening their power or worsening their national project? There are, of course, a number of reasons as to why states do not lightly let go of territory. In addition to losing the value of what it contains, doing so may encourage others to leave and/or embolden foreign adversaries to think they can nibble off a bite.¹² But part of the story must be that there are ways to reduce the weakening and worsening effects once the land is absorbed. People can be moved out or moved in; 'alien' people can be assimilated or excluded; parties that expected to lose in the new lands can find a way to compete there.¹³ This process of nation-building goes hand in hand with the process of establishing borders—and continues long afterwards.¹⁴ As recent events remind us, although the United States fixed its territorial extent a century ago, the process of knitting its people together is ongoing.

¹² See, for example, Barbara F. Walter, "Explaining the Intractability of Territorial Conflict," *International Studies Review* 5:4 (2003): 137–53.

¹³ See, for example, Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ See, for example, Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

U.S. foreign policy has been no less motivated by racism and xenophobia than has police work in many cities and towns across America.¹ In his ambitious new book, *The Picky Eagle*, Richard W. Maass finds xenophobia to be chiefly responsible for the United States' remarkably circumscribed geographic expansion. As "an Anglo-Saxon republic," in Sen. Charles Sumner's words (169), U.S. leaders declined to annex more land and people in North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific (9, 11, 14), despite having the necessary military, financial, and population advantages to do so. American officials had no use for "millions of Mexicans who were 'bigoted, ignorant, idle lawless, slavish, and yet free,'" as the *Charleston Mercury* put it (141), just as they had no use for the "ignorant, brutal, hostile, and savage" Philippine population, in the words of Sen. William Allen (188, 192-193). So American politicians instead cautiously expanded the United States. They sought to "govern [] themselves the way they wanted" (27-38). In fact, the United States' reluctance to annex new lands—even if for selfish reasons rather than altruism or hegemonic restraint (205-207)—has constituted a hallmark of U.S. behavior as a great power and superpower. The United States inscribed the norm of non-annexation into the Charter of the United Nations (7) and the postwar world, such that it has become an accepted component of late-twentieth- and twenty-first century international relations.

Maass offers a second-image explanation of the many episodes of actual and potential territorial annexation by the United States: "domestic impact theory." According to domestic impact theory, political leaders either approve or disapprove of annexation depending on the political consequences of annexation with respect to their "control of state policy or their goals for the state itself" (19). State-level factors, Kenneth Waltz's "second image"—here, the actual or anticipated democratic responses to political leaders' annexation of a new area—thereby affect the international system of states, Waltz's "third image"—here, whether or not a state gains power relative to others through its inclusion of new areas and their inhabitants, with the labor, revenues, material resources, and geostrategic advantages that attend the acquisitions. Foremost among leaders' concerns and "weigh[ing] heavily on their deliberations over any foreign policy," such as annexation, are "leaders' concerns about domestic costs, heightened by the interaction of democracy and xenophobia" (23). In particular, "if a certain policy is likely to change the state's institutions or demographics in ways that affect a leader's domestic political influence or normative goals for the state, that leader will treat those changes as costs or benefits of that policy when deciding whether or not to pursue it" (23). The xenophobia of a democratic state's electorate (2, 31-35) may thereby motivate a majority to oppose annexation (and consequently weaken leaders' positions) and may impose normative costs (by incorporating alien peoples in the state and "worsening" state ideals).

Maass tests his model in 23 historical cases, ranging from the early west, with American leaders acting under the Articles of Confederation, to the 1898 acquisitions of Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. He finds that domestic impact theory is able to account for the developments in each of the cases and that the rival "profitability theory"—theory based on the advantage of material gains from annexation minus military costs (26-27)—correlates with the outcomes in 13 of the 23 cases and is consistent with "within-case evidence" in only 8 of the cases (Table 8.1, 200-201). Furthermore, and unlike domestic impact theory, profitability theory explains none of the cases uniquely.

The Picky Eagle is noteworthy in several respects. Most fundamentally, domestic impact theory addresses a cornerstone of international relations: the logic behind the persistence of states amid the globalization of financial markets, commerce, information, consumer culture, and, to a lesser degree, labor. The fact that political leaders in democratic societies are still elected by constituents who almost all reside within their national boundaries tethers leaders to the opinions and interests of their voters, whether with respect to trade, the use of the armed force, or ethnic and racial identity. Elected and appointed politicians have to calculate the effects of acquiring area and people lying beyond the borders of their electorate.

The United States was often willing to annex new lands when they contained relatively few aliens (such as the Louisiana Purchase and the Oregon Cession). On these and other occasions, U.S. leaders believed non-European Americans would

¹ Maass defines "xenophobia" as inclusive of racism and a belief in cultural superiority.

readily be numerically and culturally overwhelmed (48, 143, 176)—or “minorated,” as D.W. Meinig puts it²—thereby making these areas and their inhabitants safe for annexation. Yet throughout the history of U.S. geographical expansion, the United States “fit our policies...to our own internal political opinions,” as Theodore Roosevelt put it in 1937, in reference to the United States’ island acquisitions as of 1898.³

In addition, Maass’s book sheds valuable light on the many instances when the United States did not expand, even though it had good economic and/or geostrategic reasons and the military wherewithal to do so. While most readers know that the United States took only the northern half of Mexico in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and are familiar with the outcomes of the Spanish-American War, fewer know the details of how the United States secured the trans-Appalachian west (48-52), realize that the United States might have taken more of Canada in the early nineteenth century, or appreciate the fact that U.S. leaders considered annexing Cuba at several instances in the early nineteenth century (157-166) as well as the Dominican Republic in 1869-1870 (168-170). Whereas IR scholars and most political scientists take the shape of the lower 48 states for granted, Maass valuably shows how contingent the dimensions of the United States actually are and how xenophobia—inclusive of racism—has historically motivated U.S. foreign policy (208-209). Sometimes U.S. leaders successfully annexed new lands and their inhabitants, as with Florida (57-62) and Indian removal (73-74, 76-82); at other times, they were unsuccessful, as with the Aroostook War and Canada in 1838-1840 (102-104) and the Fenian raids shortly after the Civil War (the Fenians were Irish-Americans who opposed to British rule in Canada) (107-112).

The Picky Eagle features a rare combination of original IR theory, extensive primary and secondary research, and succinct syntheses of almost two-dozen historical cases. It nevertheless prompts several observations and a few questions.

One observation is that the book’s focus on “leaders,” rather than on “parties” or “factions” (e.g., 56-57, 65-66, 73-74) slights the significance of partisan ideas and political principles that often motivate and unite political leaders and the electorate.⁴ The attention to “leaders” may make domestic impact theory more transportable as IR theory (11, 22), but it should nonetheless be possible to generalize from U.S. partisanship in the application of “domestic impact theory.” Presidential or parliamentary states typically have one or more parties that are discernably more nationalist, racist (or xenophobic) than the other(s). A focus on partisanship could explain why the party of national aggrandizement and imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century—the Republicans of William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, Orville Platt, John Spooner, et al.,—backed away from further overseas expansion. Investigating the logic of the leading Republicans would provide the microfoundations necessary to explain their change of foreign policy. The book would have similarly benefited from more attention to the expansionist policies linking Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and the antebellum Democratic-Republicans.

A second point is that domestic impact theory does not appear to have a fixed role for the agency of the people and leaders of foreign states who pursue or resist ‘annexation’ (5). The book discusses Québec’s resistance to the American rebels’ invasion of late 1775 and early 1776 (88), for instance, but it neglects the Canadian resistance to the United States attempt to annex Canada in the War of 1812. The U.S.-Canadian military stalemate at Lundy’s Lane (the bloodiest battle of the war) and the defeat of American forces at Chrysler’s Farm on November 13, 1813, wrecked the chances for an American offensive against Montreal and Lower Canada,⁵ despite the hopes and expectations of President Jefferson, James Monroe, John Calhoun,

² D.W. Meinig, *Continental America, 1800-1867: The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, Vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 173.

³ Roosevelt quoted in A.G. Hopkins, *American Empire: A Global History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 511.

⁴ See, for example, Scott A. Silverstone’s treatment of partisan positions and oppositions in *Divided Union: The Politics of War in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), and Hopkins’s treatments in *American Empire*.

⁵ Silverstone, *Divided Union*, 98; Nugent, *Habits of Empire*, 84-85.

Henry Clay, and other U.S. leaders. What is more, these battles punctuated the fact that many Canadians—Québécois, former Loyalists, and other immigrants from the American states, among them—had no desire to be annexed by the United States.⁶

The people of the Philippines likewise violently opposed U.S. imperialism (190, 205) (see below). Conversely, Sam Houston and other Texans were strongly vocal and highly persistent supporters of Texas's admission into the Union (122, 128, 132). Had Texas leaders been neutral or hostile to statehood, however, it is doubtful that President John Tyler and a majority in Congress would have agreed to admit Texas as a state in 1845 or that they would have been able to annex Texas by means of a joint resolution—i.e., a simple majority of both houses (7). It is more likely that they would have insisted on a treaty, with a two-thirds approval in the U.S. Senate, or simply refused to annex Texas.

Yet U.S. leaders did not anticipate the resistance of Canadians in the early and mid-nineteenth century and Filipinos at the turn of the twentieth century. So they didn't figure their opposition into *a priori* military costs. By the same token, Texans' cooperation with U.S. leaders and their hostility towards the Mexican government presumably lowered the military costs of annexing Texas. Domestic impact theory does not take the agency of the inhabitants of annexed areas, whether friendly or hostile to annexation, into account.

One question the book raises is its history of the non-annexation of Cuba following the Spanish-American War. Although some members of Congress viewed Cubans through racist lenses, President McKinley's and Congress's decisions not to annex Cuba was less driven by xenophobia (172, 179) and more motivated by the fact that Spain had already rejected McKinley's offers to buy Cuba for hundreds of millions of dollars in March and early April 1898. By the time Spain was prepared to sell Cuba (180), it was too late: congressional Democrats, the press, and the public were already committed to "Cuba Libre." It was the passionate and widespread enthusiasm for Cuban independence that engendered Americans' sympathy for José Martí, that motivated the filibusterers, that drove William Randolph Hearst's and Joseph Pulitzer's yellow journalism,⁷ and that helped the bipartisan passage of the Teller Amendment (180), which committed the United States to Cuban independence. Although the author recognizes the importance of Vermont Sen. Redfield Proctor's speech to his fellow senators (176-177) and acknowledges the impact that the accounts Spanish brutalities in Cuba had on the Americans (175-176), Maass nonetheless emphasizes the xenophobia of Senator Proctor and other U.S. leaders (179). The irony is that Maass's domestic impact theory is right: the intrastate political consequences of annexation were of chief importance. Except the motives were more humanitarian than racist.

Another question of historical interpretation concerns the indeterminacy of the political events leading up to and in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War. The author proposes that the annexation by the United States came to an end because "an old process had run its course" (2) and the "practice" of annexing its neighbors "gradually disappeared" (3). Yet at the turn of the twentieth century, there was great uncertainty with respect to both annexation *and* empire.⁸ It was by no means clear that Puerto Rico, Cuba, or other areas would not be eventually annexed in the author's definition of the term (see below). As one federal judge wrote soon after the Treaty of Paris, the residents of the new "island territories would pose

⁶ Burns, *American Imperialism*, 31.

⁷ Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst's *New York American* were the original "yellow press" (175), so named because both papers featured the "Yellow Kid" cartoon (where the Yellow Kid wore a smock actually printed in yellow ink). Because of the newspapers' pioneering sensationalism of the Spanish atrocities against Cubans, they and similarly sensationalist newspapers around the country became known as the "yellow press" (Bartholomew H. Sparrow, "Strategic Adjustment and the American Navy: The Spanish-American War, the Yellow Press, and the 1990s," in *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment*, eds. P. Trubowitz, E. Goldman, and E. Rhodes, 139-175 [New York: Columbia University Press; Social Science Research Council, 1998]).

⁸ See Hopkins, *American Empire*, 497-498.

no more of a challenge to political education...than had the ‘cowboy civilization of Wyoming, Nevada and Montana.’”⁹ Or, as Sen. Kenneth Wherry inimitably declared, “With God’s help, we will lift Shanghai up and up, ever up, until it is just like Kansas City.” Although most U.S. leaders rejected annexing the heavily populated Philippines (as Maass points out) and although Senator Wherry was speaking of China four decades later, many influential Americans believed that “less civilized” peoples could, with the proper tutelage, be assimilated (179, 181).

The decisions in the *Insular Cases* highlight the indeterminacy with respect to the political and constitutional annexation of the United States’ new island territories. Not only did eight of the ten *Insular Cases* of 1901 feature 5-4 decisions, no single opinion of the five separate opinions in *Downes v. Bidwell* (the seminal decision of the *Insular Cases*, which attracted the most public attention since *Dred Scott v. Sandford*) received the support of a majority of the justices. *Downes* was not decided until two and a half years after the Treaty of Paris, moreover, and it would be another two years before the Supreme Court issued its first decision on the political rights of the people of new U.S. territories in *Hawaii v. Mankichi* (which denied the Sixth Amendment’s guarantee of a jury trial to a Hawaiian resident).

The United States’ ‘imperial’ expansion was indeterminate in another way. The formal American empire (180) was not necessarily limited to “Porto Rico,” the other Spanish islands of the West Indies, Guam, and the Philippine Islands “cede[d]” to the United States (Treaty of Paris, Art. II). Many Americans, especially the Republicans in the White House and in control of Congress, assumed that the United States would, as a new international power and in competition with Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and other imperial states, continue to acquire overseas possessions. As U.S. Attorney General John Griggs argued before the Supreme Court,¹⁰ the United States might well acquire “Egypt and the Soudan [*sic*], or a section of Central Africa, or a spot in the Antarctic Circle, or a section of the Chinese Empire.”¹¹

Yet the United States subsequently added only a handful of relatively small island groups: American Samoa in 1899, the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1917, and the Northern Marianas in 1975 (188). All were geo-strategically useful as actual or potential sites for naval stations, coaling stations, and, for the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), proving grounds. They were opportunistic imperial acquisitions that preempted other powers from acquiring them (see 173) and caused minimal public backlash. Their acquisitions accord with both profitability theory and domestic impact theory.

So why did the United States almost entirely end its imperial expansion and not acquire “Egypt” or “a section of Central Africa”? Here, the prolonged and costly Philippine War of 1899-1902—with 16,000 Filipino and 4,000 American deaths (190)—is of critical importance. The difficult Philippine experience dissuaded U.S. leaders from further geographic expansion (205),¹² whether annexation *or* imperialism. It is a point that merits more attention, given the indeterminacy of US history at the turn of the twentieth century, and one where research in military records may have been able to reveal more. The book refers to the correspondence and reports of Secretary of War Henry Knox (65-70), to Commodore George Dewey’s autobiography, and, in secondary sources, to military strategists such as Alfred T. Mahan (182). But it does not otherwise consult Navy or War Department records and it would be useful to know what role military considerations had

⁹ Elmer B. Adams, “The Causes and Results of Our War with Spain from a Legislative Standpoint,” *Yale Law Journal* Vol. 8 (1900): 119-133, 131.

¹⁰ *John H. Goetze v. United States* 182 U.S. 221 (1901).

¹¹ *The Insular Cases*, ed. Albert Howe, Congress of the United States, Fifty-sixth Congress, 2d Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1901), 367; also see *Downes v. Bidwell* 182 U.S. 244 (1901), 374, Fuller, C.J., Harlan, Brewer and Peckham, J.J. dissenting.

¹² See Hopkins, *American Empire*, 495; Thomas McCormick, “From Old Empire to New: The Changing Dynamics and Tactics of American Empire,” in *Colonial Crucible: Empire and the Making of the Modern American State*, eds. Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 72, 74.

on U.S. leaders' decisions to stop annexing territory and eschew imperialism after 1898 (except as preemptive measures in the Samoan Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Marianas).

This takes me to a final question. What distinguishes 'annexation' from 'imperialism'? Maass defines "annexation" as constituting one of two forms of territorial expansion (with imperialism being the other). Annexation is "the absorption of territory into a state," with the "state" being defined in Weberian terms, as an institutional order that exercises "a monopoly of legitimate violence within its borders" (3-4). A state's absorption of a new area through annexation expands Westphalian sovereignty such that the "national homeland" (of the state) is redefined. Annexation by the state "integrat[es] new territory within its core protective, extractive, and legislative institutions," and, as a result, reshapes the "local identities, institutions, and cultural politics" of the annexed areas (3-4). Annexation consequently minimizes political instability and deters "international rivals" (4) from infringing on the acquiring state's extended sphere of sovereignty. In contrast, a state's geographic expansion through 'imperialism' constitutes the exercise of sovereignty through an institutional order 'separate' and 'subordinate' from the governmental regime "that defines the state itself" (4).

As a practical matter, however, these definitions are much less distinct than they might seem. Annexation and imperialism can be better thought of as ideal types existing along a continuum, where U.S. geographic expansion has always occurred in the space between these two apparent opposites. Only once in American history did U.S. leaders immediately integrate an annexed area and its residents into the institutions of government: Texas, and that was after ten years of trying. As a rule, newly annexed areas were kept separate from the national homeland (here, the union of states). As districts and territories they were incompletely integrated into the institutions of national government and governed by presidentially appointed governors and judges, by a dedicated congressional committee (the House Committee on Territories, 1825-1946), and by particular federal agencies (e.g., the General Land Office; the Bureau of Indian Affairs) that exerted authority in few of the states themselves. The residents in the organized territories were minimally represented in the federal government, by a non-voting congressional delegate, and had no U.S. senator and no voice in choosing the U.S. president. And the residents of the newly acquired areas maintained their own local identities, institutions, and cultural politics for years and sometime for decades (42).

It was a hybrid system, in effect, one that was mostly separate from the institutions of the American state (3, Table 1.1, 4), but not entirely self-governing. California (1850) was the quickest to be admitted as a state, only two years after the 1848 Mexican Cession. Ohio, to use an example from the Northwest Territory, had to wait sixteen years after the passage of the Northwest Ordinance (1787-1803) and twenty years after the British Cession (1783) before it became a state. Louisiana's admission after the Louisiana Purchase was delayed (1803-1812) (56), as was Oregon's after the Oregon Treaty (1846-1859). New Mexico and Arizona took 64 years to become states (1848-1912), Hawai'i 61 years (1898-1959), Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota 86 years (1803-1889), Alaska (113) 92 years (1867-1959), and Oklahoma 104 years (1803-1907). In fact, the average length of time between when an area came under U.S. sovereignty and when it was wholly or partly admitted as an American state came to forty years.

Although it was assumed that the trans-Appalachian west¹³ and much of the trans-Mississippi west would sooner or later fully become integrated into the institutions of U.S. government, this was no automatic process. Initially, the admission of slave states was matched with that of free states (127, 159) and later policymakers had doubts about the fitness of newly acquired areas. Not only Montana and Hawai'i (186-187), but also New Mexico, Alaska, and other areas had few European Americans and high proportions of Hispanics, American Indians, and/or others. Many nineteenth-century American politicians, public officials, and opinion leaders did *not* "equat[e] territorial acquisition with annexation" (42). And there is nothing in the Constitution—the core of the American state's institutional order—mandating that U.S. territories and

¹³ I refer to the "trans-Appalachian west," consistent with previous usage. Maass and Walter Nugent, with whom the author studied, are the only scholars who use the neologism "Transappalachia."

possessions had to be admitted as states. Congress’s authority to delay indefinitely the admission of states was also the power to refuse “annexation.”

U.S. sovereignty over its ‘imperial’ territories constituted a hybrid system of government, in short. Never did the United States extend geographic sovereignty (in distinction to short-term military occupations) to populated territories without granting their inhabitants a modicum of inclusion into the institutions of U.S. government. Puerto Rico and the Philippines were both granted ‘resident commissioners’ (although their political status was not identical to that of the mainland territorial delegates).¹⁴ Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and Hawaiians, as previously with Mormons in the intermountain west, were granted non-specified fundamental protections of the Constitution. And U.S. citizenship was extended to the residents of Puerto Rico (1917), Guam (1950), U.S. Virgin Islands (1952), and the Northern Marianas (1986), thereby allowing the island citizens to travel under U.S. passports, qualify for federal jobs and benefits, and bring family members to the states proper. Even so, as long as they reside in a territory, these persons are denied full representation in Congress, have no senators, cannot vote for the U.S. president, and are not represented among the president’s executive branch and judicial appointees.

As a result *The Picky Eagle* elides two analytically distinct components of annexation: (1) the initial geographic expansion and assertion of Westphalian sovereignty, and (2) the decision to admit an area and its people as full members of democratic polity (in the American case, a federal republic with dual citizenship in a state and in the United States). Yet in several instances of U.S. geographic expansion, whether the inhabitants of newly acquired areas were to be included as full members of the United States has remained in question (as with Puerto Rico at present). During this time of limbo, it may not be clear which areas will become states, what the boundaries of the new states will be, and when—and if—the territories or possessions will be admitted as states.

The author’s hard distinction between annexation and imperialism may be for reasons of historical simplicity and theoretical parsimony, but the dichotomy misleads historically and carries an analytic cost. To treat ‘annexation’ and ‘imperialism’ as opposing concepts overstates the historical differences among areas and peoples in the US geographic expansion, and it underplays the great variability in how the United States acquired (to use ‘acquired’ as a neutral term) new lands and their residents. Not only did the areas subject to annexation and the people subject to imperialism manifest a wide array of distinct governmental arrangements, it was not always clear which areas would be added in which ways—whether they would be annexed, acquired as imperial possessions, or ultimately divested (as with the Philippines). Alternatively, imperialism could precede annexation, as with Hawai’i (4).

To put it another way, had the United States’ newly ‘annexed’ areas *not* actually been excluded from the U.S. institutions of government and from representation in the Senate and presidency—contrary to how ‘annexation’ is defined in the book—American history would look very different. There would have most likely been no matching of the admission of free states with slave states; there would have an earlier resolution of the slavery issue in the form of civil war or secession; and Texas would not have to wait from 1836 to 1845 for statehood (128). Congressional, presidential, and judicial politics would have developed in quite different and unpredictable directions following the British Cession and, especially, the Louisiana Purchase.

The other cost of this parsimony is theoretical. Drawing a bright line between annexation and imperialism sacrifices a rich opportunity to study states that historically have had and/or currently have territories. Whereas some colonies and/or territories have been absorbed into states’ ‘national homelands’ and been incorporated institutionally, other states have had or have colonies and/or territories kept separate from the state itself or divested (as with decolonization). The United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, and other empires are among the states in this category, but so too are Canada and Australia (both of which absorbed into the state and still possess territories) and the People’s Republic of China (with Macau, Hong Kong, and Tibet). Given the rarity of annexation in recent decades, as

¹⁴ The Philippines had two resident commissioners from 1902-1934.

Maass points out (1, 8-9), this would seem to be a promising avenue for future research—one the dichotomy between annexation and imperialism misses.

Domestic impact theory is a blunt model by which to interpret the history of U.S. geographic expansion, one that doesn't always work—at least as operationalized here—as we see with the United States' attempts to annex Canada in the early and mid-nineteenth century and its non-annexation of Cuba at the turn of the twentieth century. Neither is it able to capture the unintended consequences and unpredictability of political development, per the United States' acquisition of areas and islands dominantly populated by non-European Americans. And, per its treatment of the agency of the inhabitants of areas that U.S. leaders sought to annex, it is incompletely conceptualized. Lastly it treats areas and their inhabitants as either annexed (and incorporated into the nation-state) or as colonies (and not integrated into the American polity). Yet the history of the United States shows that it took many years on average for the residents of the areas to be 'annexed' into the nation-state and that the people and areas of the American colonies were incompletely included in national institutions, partly protected under the Constitution, and granted some of the rights of full U.S. citizens.

The author's rational model of international relations nonetheless offers significant benefits. As an explanation of the particulars of the United States' geographic dimensions, the Maass's model mostly gets it right. Domestic impact theory provides a persuasive logic for how and why states expand geographically, and it advances a compelling application of Robert Putnam's two-level game theory of international relations. Not only does *The Picky Eagle* generate important insights with respect to the history of U.S. geographic expansion—a testimony to Maass's extensive research—the book provokes historians and IR scholars alike to revisit, refine, and extend its model and findings.

RESPONSE BY RICHARD W. MAASS, OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

A book's purpose is to spark conversation, and I would like to thank Stacie Goddard, Dale Copeland, Joseph Parent, Kenneth Schultz, and Bartholomew Sparrow for engaging so thoughtfully with mine. The words of praise for *The Picky Eagle* from scholars whom I deeply respect are humbling, and the reviews highlight many points of interest and avenues for further research. Special thanks as well to H-Diplo for hosting this roundtable and to Andrew Szarejko for organizing it.

Since the reviews summarize the book's major arguments, I will include only a brief overview here. *The Picky Eagle* asks why the United States stopped pursuing annexation. The prior conventional wisdom among international relations scholars focused on the profitability of conquest—in Jack Snyder's words, "The strong conquer the weak because it pays."³⁷ Yet U.S. leaders rejected many profitable opportunities to expand. Unlike most great powers in history, the United States refused to target nearby societies in favor of sparsely-populated lands, and annexation disappeared from its foreign policy agenda as it rose to great power status. This paved the way for twentieth-century U.S. leaders to use their predominant global position to prohibit conquest under international law. Given how consequential its preference for stable borders has become, understanding why the United States expanded where it did—and why it did not expand where it did not—is a subject of central importance to international relations.

My main argument is that annexation's domestic consequences were the primary factors that limited U.S. territorial ambitions (9). When U.S. leaders declined to pursue nearby territories, they usually did so because they feared that annexation would undermine their domestic political influence (*weakening*) or their normative vision for their country (*worsening*), not because they were deterred by foreign adversaries. Democracy and xenophobia exacerbated these domestic costs by rendering elected leaders vulnerable to demographic changes and by portraying alien peoples as unfit to share in representative self-government. The book's domestic impact theory suggests that leaders considering annexation incorporate its domestic consequences alongside its material benefits and military costs in their decision making, and that prohibitive domestic costs can override material profitability and render annexation undesirable.

Similar domestic concerns confronted presidents, secretaries, and congressmen in the 1810s, 1840s, 1860s, and 1890s, with respect to territories as diverse as Quebec, Mexico, Cuba, and the Philippines. Contrary to many historical accounts, *The Picky Eagle* shows that the United States did not experience a clean break between its early territorial expansion and later commercial expansion. Instead, U.S. leaders approached territorial opportunities on a case-by-case basis, seizing some but rejecting others until no desirable targets remained. The book offers twenty-three in-depth case studies of U.S. foreign policy between 1774 and 1898, finding that although profitability can largely account for the positive cases (why the United States annexed the territories it did), we must take into account annexation's domestic consequences to understand the negative cases (why the United States did not annex the territories it did not). Within-case evidence reveals that domestic concerns frequently drove minorities to oppose annexation in the positive cases as well. As a result, the book concludes that domestic impact theory offers a useful revision to the conventional wisdom.

The rich documentary records of racism, xenophobia, and domestic politics shaping U.S. decisions produce case studies that are "often heart-wrenching," in Parent's words, and that force us to revisit the common assumption that international expansion is primarily shaped by material constraints. They also complicate the prevailing narrative that attributes the decline of conquest to recent economic and military developments like globalization and nuclear weapons, suggesting that the United States lost interest in further annexations for reasons of identity and politics long before those developments

³⁷ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 10; cf. Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), ch. 5; Carl Kaysen, "Is War Obsolete? A Review Essay," *International Security* 14:4 (1990): 42-64.

emerged. Unfortunately timely in its emphasis on the role of race in U.S. foreign policy, *The Picky Eagle's* findings echo through today's events and speak to scholars of great power politics, race and identity politics, the domestic sources of foreign policy, the origins of the liberal international order, American political development, and U.S. history.

The reviewers raise many interesting questions, which I organize into three categories for the purpose of my response: empirical support, conceptual nuances, and avenues for further research. First, while the reviewers agree that the case studies offer substantial evidence for domestic impact theory, some question its record in explaining all twenty-three cases. While Parent argues that a perfect success rate implies that U.S. leaders “were prisoners of necessity,” the book consistently emphasizes the historical contingency of U.S. expansion. As Parent himself notes elsewhere, “readers get a real sense of the uncertainty that surrounds annexation,” a point echoed forcefully by both Schultz and Sparrow as well. Far from implying a deterministic logic, domestic impact theory's record across the case studies reflects the value added by incorporating domestic political and normative factors alongside material ones.

Copeland contends that “a better approach” would have been to build a narrower theory centered on domestic costs alone, admit that it “doesn't always work,” and pit it head-to-head against realpolitik. This prioritizes maintaining paradigmatic borders over crafting a theory capable of explaining a fuller range of cases. His suggestion to “explore the conditions under which the realpolitik aspect... causally overrides the domestic cost aspect” is similarly unworkable: profitability theory represented the clear default position for scholars of international expansion, so *The Picky Eagle* appropriately examines the conditions under which domestic factors override material profitability rather than the other way around. These critiques concern form more than function; Copeland agrees that accounting for annexation's domestic political and normative consequences represents “a highly valuable corrective to structural realism” and that “the domestic costs of expansion were indeed very important to the final decision” in most cases.

Copeland suggests that Louisiana's 1812 admission to statehood violates domestic impact theory because it occurred despite “great fear that the French and Spanish-speaking Catholics of the region were unable to ever become ‘Americans’ in the political and cultural sense.” While the book focuses on initial decisions to acquire territory and does not directly explain the timing of state admission, it is worth noting that the population of New Orleans changed rapidly after its acquisition by the United States. As historian Paul Frymer notes, this included “the doubling of the white population to about half the territory,” and observers reported that its French residents rapidly adopted American customs. As a result, while some in Congress did object that Louisiana's population “will not be American,” most agreed with Congressman John Rhea of Tennessee that “the population of the Orleans Territory is not a French population; whatever that population was... it is now... a population... of the United States.” Congressman Henry Clay dubbed it “homogenous to the character of the country—American in principle and feeling.”³⁸ If proponents effectively argued that the people of New Orleans were sufficiently Americanizing, Congress' decision to grant Louisiana statehood would certainly accord with the logic of domestic impact theory.

Copeland's falsifiability concerns strike more deeply at within-case evidence and case study research. Alleging that the decisions to annex Alaska and Hawaii “could have gone either way,” he argues that the domestic contestation of U.S. foreign policy undermines our ability to set falsifiable predictions. Yet the fact that a decision was contested does not imply that it was a coin toss—both Alaska and Hawaii were consciously annexed by Congressional majorities over minority opposition (just like the Louisiana Purchase, Texas, California, etc.)—and the domestic political and normative objections of the opponents of these annexations represent useful within-case evidence confirming that such concerns factored into their decision making. Moreover, domestic impact theory does not predict that merely a pinch of domestic costs spoils the broth, but that the severe domestic costs associated with densely-populated alien societies can override material profitability and deter leaders from pursuing annexation. The book sets clear standards for its empirical tests: if U.S. leaders had rejected opportunities for annexation primarily for lack of material benefits or for fear of military costs (without domestic

³⁸ Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 103.

consequences significantly factoring into their decision making) then domestic impact theory would add little of value beyond the conventional wisdom (40). They did not.

Comparing the Hawaii and Cuba cases, both of which occurred in 1898 amidst the same war with Spain, is instructive. Annexation's opponents in Congress argued that both islands' local populations were unfit for citizenship, but where a broad consensus saw Cuba's 1.6 million inhabitants as a territorial fixture that precluded its annexation, Hawaii's proponents successfully portrayed its non-White residents as only temporary obstacles to its Americanization. In the words of Senator George Hoar, the 31,000 Native Hawaiians were "a perishing people" and the islands' 46,000 East Asian laborers "will get out when we get proper American labor laws," ensuring that Anglo-Americans would dominate Hawaii's future (187).

Sparrow disagrees with my reading of the Cuba case, but here we can appeal to the historical record. To say that "some members of Congress viewed Cubans through racist lenses" is a dramatic understatement given the evidence of widespread racism directed toward Cubans (as well as other island populations) in the 1890s. Similarly, Sparrow's claim that "President McKinley's and Congress's decisions not to annex Cuba" were "motivated by the fact that Spain had already rejected McKinley's offers to buy Cuba" is a non sequitur: if they truly wanted to annex Cuba, why would a prior diplomatic rejection prevent them from doing so once the U.S. military had driven Spain out? Rumors of a possible purchase never advanced beyond the realm of speculation, and at no point did Congress authorize funds for such a purchase—much as it had refused to fund more concerted efforts by Presidents James Polk, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan (159-65).

Sparrow also claims that the 1838-1839 Aroostook War and the 1866-1871 Fenian raids represented "unsuccessful" U.S. attempts to annex Canadian territory despite the historical record indicating otherwise. Both cases saw local actors attempt to drive the United States into war with Britain—the government of Maine during the former case, the Fenians during the latter—only to be roundly rebuffed by federal leaders. In March 1839, Congress authorized President Martin Van Buren to spend up to \$10 million and call fifty thousand militia to defuse the Aroostook War by overwhelming not only New Brunswick's border forces but Maine's state militia as well (103). Similarly, Presidents Andrew Johnson and Ulysses Grant ordered federal authorities to seize Fenian weapons and enforce neutrality laws rather than support their private invasions of Canada (110-111).

Sparrow's strongest empirical critique concerns the indeterminacy of U.S. territorial policy at the turn of the twentieth century. As he notes, the *Insular Cases* took several years to resolve the status of the "unincorporated territories" and the Philippine War of 1899-1902 played a powerful role in dissuading imperialists in the United States from pursuing further colonies. The book's final case study embraces this "uncertainty," devoting substantial attention to Congressional debates over Puerto Ricans' identity and the constitutionality of permanent imperialism. Further, one of *The Picky Eagle's* major thematic through-lines is the observation (contrary to many accounts) that there was no single turning point when the United States stopped pursuing annexation (2). Instead, U.S. leaders confronted territorial opportunities on a case-by-case basis, and the domestic political and normative concerns that drove them to reject opportunities prior to 1898 remained in play as the United States struggled with the challenges of formal and informal imperialism thereafter.

Beyond the empirical record, some of the reviews highlight nuances regarding the book's use of specific concepts. Sparrow questions its distinction between annexation, which I define as "the absorption of territory into a state," and imperialism, for which I adopt Michael Doyle's definition of "foreign control over effective sovereignty."³⁹ That distinction is meaningful because the domestic consequences of annexing territory differ from those of subordinating it under an imperial regime. Where Sparrow sees their relationship in the United States before 1898 as "hybrid," however, I see it as progressive: Congress treated imperialism as a temporary stepping stone (albeit usually decades long) until it judged a territory institutionally and racially ready to complete its annexation. As the case studies recount, this perspective proved instrumental in decisions to reject the acquisition of territories that U.S. leaders saw as having no feasible path to future

³⁹ Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 35.

statehood. Sparrow also expresses a preference for treating “parties” or “factions” as units of analysis rather than “leaders,” but the book’s individual focus is appropriate given that partisanship often competed rather than overlapped with sectionalism, xenophobia, and other factors motivating U.S. leaders in the case studies.

Parent problematizes the relationship between material and identity factors, wondering, “Did the military-economic ledger drive views on race, was it the other way around, or both?” Some interaction certainly occurred—for example, many interpreted Mexico’s political disarray during the early 1800s as confirming racist stereotypes of its population. Yet the case studies offer abundant evidence that U.S. leaders’ xenophobia was not simply an ideological manifestation of economic incentives or rhetorical cover for military weakness. On the contrary, those factors often cut at cross-purposes: racist, religious, and other objections regularly stalled the pursuit of resource-rich and militarily-vulnerable societies. This highlights the importance of *The Picky Eagle*’s case-study methodology. The book based its conclusions on the logical arguments that informed policy decisions and not on broad but ultimately indeterminate indicators like a territory’s population size.

Parent also rightly observes that identities evolve over time, noting that “who counted as ‘American’ or ‘white’ was inconsistent.” Contestation over the boundaries of Whiteness did not change the fact that most U.S. leaders saw the peoples of Mexico, Cuba, the Philippines, and other areas as alien and unfit for U.S. citizenship, but it did affect the domestic role of mid-1800s Irish immigration and perceptions of Puerto Rican identity after 1898, for example. How and why identities change remains an exciting area for research (spanning psychology, sociology, and political science).

The reviewers also highlight several other promising areas for further research. Schultz observes that other feasible avenues of influence over neighbors’ foreign policies may reduce the appeal of annexation, and we should certainly expect leaders to weigh the costs and benefits of any policy choice in comparison to any available alternatives. He also notes that regime type itself may be contested, and that even the most ruthless dictators have exhibited varying governance structures across areas they conquer. While these observations do not contradict the book’s discussion of autocracies’ ability to suppress annexation’s domestic costs by marginalizing or exterminating alien populations, research exploring how those domestic costs manifest in autocratic regimes represents an exciting frontier.

Copeland notes that the domestic benefits of territorial expansion also represent a ripe area for investigation. While *The Picky Eagle* introduces those benefits theoretically in Chapter 2 and highlights them in the cases of frontier state leaders that pursued Native American lands and slave state leaders that pursued Caribbean islands, the book focuses more on domestic costs as the key to explaining its central puzzle. He further points to current applications of the book’s argument, including President Trump’s xenophobic rhetoric and its enduring implications for Puerto Rico’s status, as well as the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. There are useful opportunities for dialogue with American politics scholarship on the conditions that facilitate presidents’ foreign policy initiatives (like William McKinley taking the Philippines or James Polk conquering California) versus those that amplify legislative constraints (for example, Congress preventing Ulysses S. Grant from annexing the Dominican Republic and pre-Civil War presidents from annexing Cuba).

Schultz observes that reversals of annexation are relatively rare and calls for more attention to this area, offering a reasonable first-cut explanation in states’ efforts “to reduce weakening and worsening effects once the land is absorbed.” As the book’s case studies show, U.S. leaders regularly anticipated how they might use post-annexation policies to manipulate a territory’s demographic and domestic political future—for example, encouraging Anglo-American settlement along the Mississippi River or deporting East Asian laborers from Hawaii—and it is reasonable to assume that similar policies may be effective enough where employed to preclude reversals across various international contexts.

Finally, all four reviewers recognize that the book’s perspective resides with U.S. federal policymakers and hence that numerous promising avenues for further research exist in engaging the perspectives of other actors. While the U.S.-centric focus was an appropriate choice for this book given that its research question concerns U.S. foreign policy decision making rather than international outcomes, Native American tribes, foreign governments, frontier settlers, private filibusters, local governors, slaves, merchants, and others also shaped the course of events, have valuable stories to tell, and are justifiably

receiving attention from many excellent historians. Beyond those actors directly engaged in the history of U.S. territorial expansion, I join Parent and Schultz in looking forward to domestic impact theory's potential applications within the contexts of other countries. In the latter's words, while this study is "distinctly American... the theory is general."