

every major party presidential candidate from 1952 to 2004 using a variety of sources. She analyzes advertisements by the candidates, speeches by the candidates, and media coverage of the candidates. On the basis of this analysis, she concludes that 10 out of 13 insurgent candidates actually ran insurgent campaigns, and that 8 out of 13 clarifying candidates ran clarifying campaigns. Four of the insurgent candidates running insurgent campaigns won, while none of the insurgent candidates failing to run insurgent campaigns won. In a more impressive statistical measure of the utility of Vavreck's theory, she points out that adding her measure of candidate behavior to a simple economic forecasting model that includes changes in gross national product, incumbency, and presidential approval reduces the average forecast error from 2.8 percentage points to 1.7 percentage points. Since this is a reduction of over 35 percent, this is impressive.

This is an impressive book. Vavreck's main contributions are to offer a coherent theory of how economic context should condition campaign effects, to document what types of campaigns presidential candidates have run, and to show that those candidates running the campaigns she suggests have influenced the election in their favor.

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**Blueprint for Disaster: The Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing**  
by D. Bradford Hunt. Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 2009.  
392 pp. \$35.00.

Public housing in the United States was initially developed as transitional housing for poor and working-class families who, due to temporary dislocation from the workforce or other forms of acute economic distress, were unable to afford decent housing available in the private market. Over time, however, public housing in many cities has become a major problem, seen by many as a spectacular failure of public policy and social welfare provision. Nowhere is this more true than in Chicago, one of the nation's largest public housing authorities and perhaps the most well-known and notorious example of this failure. Early public housing developments in Chicago were in high demand, commanding long waiting lists for the chance to move into the new, modern, spacious housing that represented a promising alternative to life in the city's extensive slums. But their promise was short-lived, and over the course of only a few decades, public housing in Chicago had become both emblematic of and a major contributor to the creation of some of the worst examples of concentrated urban poverty in the country, characterized by severe physical deterioration, high levels of violence and crime, racial segregation, and social isolation.

How had such a dramatic negative turnaround come to pass? This is the question that D. Bradford Hunt seeks to answer in *Blueprint for Disaster: The*

*Unraveling of Chicago Public Housing.* Drawing on secondary sources, key-informant interviews, and a broad range of archival data, Hunt provides a rich social and political history of the making of public housing in Chicago, interrogating current explanations for its demise and shedding new light on the actors, ideologies, policy decisions, political contexts, and implementation processes that led to its failures.

The disasters that befell public housing in Chicago by the 1980s (and that provide the foundation for the ambitious and controversial remaking of public housing currently underway with the launching, in 1999, of the city's Plan for Transformation) were, according to Hunt, the product of "contingent and compounding policy choices made by actors at the federal and local level" (p. 8), which were themselves informed by competing ideological orientations and complicated by historical contingencies, competing interests, and contentious political processes. Hunt's analysis helps to both contextualize and bring to life, as well as suggest alternative emphases and relationships among, explanations explored to date in the literature, including detailing the struggles around and processes that led to discriminatory site selection, which ultimately concentrated public housing overwhelmingly in the city's black communities; the circumstances that led to a shift in the public housing population from essentially working class to extremely poor; the impact of financing and subsidy schemes on design, construction, and tenant selection; the nature and effects of mismanagement; and the roles of real estate interests and racist politics.

The book begins with an examination of the 1937 Housing Act, paying particular attention to the specific actors and central ideological orientations (including tensions between progressive reformers and modernist planners, the centrality of the market-failure rationale, the relative emphasis on slum clearance versus vacant-land development, the shaping of federal policy, and a division of labor between federal and local authorities) that would shape the nature of public housing, and key policy debates around it, in the decades to follow. Subsequent chapters play out the narrative of the emergence of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA); the choices surrounding and nature of the early developments; the ongoing tensions around site selection; the early and abandoned goals of racial integration in the face of fierce opposition; the local political jockeying for power between the CHA, the mayor's office, and the city council; the dynamics of federal policy choices and program management and their impact on local choices and possibilities; the efforts to apply modernist design within strict constraints of budget, space allocations, and density requirements; the emergence of social disorder in light of increasingly concentrated poverty and extreme youth-to-adult ratios within the context of the "indefensible space" provided by high-rise complex design; the response of tenants and public housing advocates to address these problems; and, finally, the emergence of new policy orientations and contemporary efforts to fundamentally reshape public housing in Chicago. It is a complex narrative. Clear

lessons are distilled regarding the genesis of failure (in particular, the details of policymaking and implementation processes that contributed so centrally to it, in spite of recognized problems), and although the implications for current efforts to address such failure or for the most fruitful directions for future policy are less clear, *Blueprint for Disaster* provides a valuable and textured analysis that will usefully contribute to central debates around public housing and poverty policy.

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**Blurring the Color Line: The New Chance for a More Integrated America** by Richard Alba. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2009. 306 pp. \$29.95.

In 2006, Richard Alba was asked to deliver the Nathan Huggins Lectures in African American history at Harvard's W.E.B. DuBois Institute. At first, the invitation caught him by surprise, since Alba isn't a scholar of the African American experience; he's built his distinguished career studying the assimilation of immigrant groups. Then he began to wonder whether he might use his expertise to say something about the future of race in America. He gave the lectures in March 2008, then quickly re-worked them into this careful, thoughtful, and wonderfully optimistic book.

Alba begins with a simple question. How was it that in the decades after World War II, Irish Americans, Italian Americans, and Jewish Americans managed to move into the mainstream of society, after almost a century on the margins? The transformation was driven by three pivotal changes, he says. The horrors of Nazism delegitimized the xenophobia and anti-Semitism that were commonplace in the first half of the century, while the dramatic postwar expansion of American universities opened up educational opportunities and the economic boom created massive numbers of white-collar jobs. Together, these changes created what Alba calls "non-zero sum mobility": the Anglo-Saxon Protestants who dominated the middle and upper classes could welcome ethnic Americans into their ranks without fearing that in the process their own position would be eroded.

Now the United States is on the edge of re-creating that dynamic, says Alba, with African Americans and Hispanic Americans taking the place that white ethnics occupied in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Much of the ideological change is already complete; though racism remains a potent force, it has lost much of its grip on the white mind. Profound economic change is impending: between 2010 and 2030, some 50 million baby boomers will retire, opening up far more jobs than there are whites to fill them. As long as non-whites get the educational opportunities they need—particularly at the higher end of the job market, where growth is likely to be greatest—they should be able to step into



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