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Huey L. Perry, ed. *Race, Politics, and Governance in the United States.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996. xii + 217 pp. $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8130-1481-4; $59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8130-1456-2.

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Deracialization: A Campaign Strategy That Sometimes Works

Deracialization is a concept describing a campaign strategy used by some black politicians with varying degrees of success. Deracialization downplays race and race specific issues when appealing to a predominantly white electorate.

The authors of this useful volume, edited by Huey L. Perry, focus on ten of the elections which took place between 1989 and 1992. In most cases the campaign is examined; in a few the administration that followed a successful campaign is studied. The contests examined do not all involve the use of deracialization to the same extent, nor were the candidates all successful, and only one black candidate was opposed by a white politician willing to use the race card as a blatant appeal to the white electorate, as did Jesse Helms against Harvey Gantt in 1990 (and in 1996).

The offices contested range from urban Mayor (New York, New Haven, Baltimore, Seattle, and Memphis) to the U.S. Senate (Illinois and North Carolina). Only one chapter focuses on a state legislative contest–Louisiana. Two deal with Governorships or contests for Governor–Virginia and Georgia.

All of the chapters were written–or revised and extended–expressly for this volume. Thus, although there is the usual discontinuity of style and focus in a work of many edited by one, the book is readable and each chapter makes a unique contribution to the whole. This is not a collection of journal articles loosely related to one or a set of sub-topics.

So different are the contexts, the experiences, the opponents, and the personalities of the black candidates discussed in this volume that it becomes fairly clear that a great deal of future research will have to be conducted in order to fully assess the utility of the deracialization strategy or generalizations about it. Perry notes in his concluding chapter, "deracialization is predicated on a significant number of whites being fair-minded enough to respond positively to universal appeals by black candidates. It is logical to assume that such white voters are in shorter supply in the south" (p. 194).

Even this assertion, though intuitively appealing, may need to be examined carefully since the first black Governor of any of the fifty states since reconstruction was a Virginian.

As a tool for scholars and teachers, the book offers a useful bibliography in addition to notes at the end of each chapter and has the additional virtue of being well-indexed. This book should be of use to teachers of state and local as well as black politics courses. In any event, it is a good read.

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