

Joshua M. Zeitz, *White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics, and the Shaping of Postwar Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 296 pp.

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expression used to emphasize common lived experiences. While musicians like Mahalia Jackson, Louis Jordan, and Muddy Waters were initially heard in Chicago night clubs, their music was soon heard on radios across the country. These musicians not only became popular and wealthy but their engagement in the commercialization of their music led to a commercialization of black culture. Music was the “original black culture industry in the city and perhaps in the country as well” (13) and it was where a connection between cultural entrepreneurship and collective racial imagination emerged.

The following two chapters that deal with print media are where Green’s argument is most explicit and convincing. Claude Barnett’s Associated Negro Press succeeded in broadening the impact of local news stories onto the national scene and vice versa, therefore tightening the connection between the local and the national. Barnett believed that this tightening of relations would generate a more empowered black public consciousness. But where Barnett failed due to his old ambassadorial style, John Johnson’s publishing company succeeded because of its more open and varied staff. Johnson’s *Ebony* magazine featured celebrities and high-end consumer goods so as to appeal to a more financially successful class of African Americans and has consequently been characterised as elitist. *Jet* magazine, sister magazine and edgier version of *Ebony*, has historically received much credit for uniting African Americans against racial discrimination because of its publication of a photo of Emmett Till’s brutalized body. Green argues that ultimately, however, it was *Ebony* more than *Jet* or ANP that transformed black American consciousness and created a homogenous national African American identity. It led to a transformation in “notions of race within the collective imagination of blacks at the time” and therefore pushed new notions of community based on race and nation (143). Through a detailed discussion of the magazine’s writers, editors and content, Green identifies *Ebony* as a source promoting a mission of activism. What is lacking in this discussion is the issue of class relations among blacks since much of the content and images presented in *Ebony* were undeniably out of reach of many African Americans.

The fifth chapter deals with the mid-1950s integration of blacks into white public housing in Chicago and the African American response to the brutal murder of a Chicago boy, Emmett Till, while visiting family in Mississippi in 1955. While many historians perceive the death of Emmett Till as initiating an African American consciousness and launching the civil rights movement, Green argues that it marked a transition between the two since a national African American identity had already been created through music and print media prior to his death. The incident emphasised the connection between black in Chicago and across the country. It thus became, for Barnett, Johnson and others, a means by which to raise awareness and consciousness about the conditions and discrimination they experienced and it served as a platform on which to fight for improvements on both the local and national front. Rather than remain silent in the face of violence, the negative experience and the availability

of national communication networks were used to fight for better conditions.

In this last chapter Green presents a strong and convincing argument for the power of images as he discusses how Till’s open casket photo served to evoke a sense of anger at the conditions of African Americans. Yet he does not apply this same analytical rigour to the many other powerful images that are presented throughout the book. If analysed closely, many images could have served as significant sources to corroborate his argument. An example of this is a photo in chapter five where the caption reads: “Police officer watches an unidentified white child throw rocks at Donnie Howard.” Although Green examines the difficulties encountered by the Howard family when they moved into a white public housing sector, the image is a powerful example of not only adult discrimination but also the extent to which whites were being socialized from a very young age to view blacks as inferior. Knowing that it came from the Claude Barnett papers, one is also left wondering who took the picture, why it was taken and for what was it used?

Overall, however, Green adds greatly to our understanding of twentieth century black Chicago, music, press, and most importantly he offers a strongly convincing argument of the important role played by Chicago’s black community in the emergence of a national African American identity through a redefined definition of community in the 1940s and early 1950s. In emphasising that Chicago’s urban environment served as a site of creativity for its black community, Green reveals the various dynamics within local communities that help shape group identities. However his focus on Chicago does not in any way render this a community bound study, rather it is a study of the connections that were drawn between communities and the impact they had on one another.

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Joshua M. Zeitz, *White Ethnic New York: Jews, Catholics, and the Shaping of Postwar Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. 296 pp.

Joshua Zeitz’s lucid and provocative book about the centrality of ethnicity in post World War II New York promises to serve as a starting-point for significant further research. After a generation of scholarship that emphasized the whitening and weakening of European ethnicity in the middle decades of the twentieth century, Zeitz revives the earlier notion that (as stated by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan): “the point about the melting pot . . . is that it did not happen. At least not in New York.” Zeitz positions ethnicity as a counter-balance to scholarship that has productively, but sometimes reductively, emphasized race. As Zeitz puts it: “Race explains a good deal about postwar politics, but not everything” (7). “Whiteness,” he asserts, “did not equal sameness” (5). Divisions among white ethnics—and particularly the “highly salient cultural differences”

that separated Jews from Irish and Italian Catholics (6)—were sufficient to splinter the New Deal coalition in New York “long before race became a central issue in local or national politics” (93). The book has notable strengths and weaknesses, both of which seem likely springboards for further inquiry.

The strengths of the book are significant, and they should give inspiration to other scholars interested in mid-century ethnicity. Largely concerned with culture and politics, Zeitz nonetheless establishes the social historical importance of ethnicity in postwar New York. Ethnicity shaped residential locations, marital choices, workplace opportunities, and schooling experiences (11–38). Divided social and institutional contexts encouraged very different views of the world. Whereas Jews placed dissent at the core of citizenship and imagined fascism the greatest peril to America, Catholics revered authority and saw Communism as the nation’s greatest threat. With contrasting conceptions of their communities and countries (as well as their enemies), Jews and Catholics voted differently (depending on how you count) from at least the 1940s onward and found themselves on opposing sides of local political controversies (94, 89–90, 114–117). In sum, Zeitz makes a convincing case that European ethnicity continued to shape both daily life and landmark events in postwar New York. His integration of social and political history demonstrates the ongoing linkages between urban ethnic communities and political constituencies. Case studies of other cities seem bound to follow.

Despite its strengths, *White Ethnic New York* may also frustrate some historians of ethnicity and urban life. Two likely qualms lie at the very core of the book. First, Zeitz makes somewhat idiosyncratic and inconsistent use of the concept of ethnicity. The book begins by sensibly (if not entirely grammatically) defining ethnicity as “the intersection between religion, national origins, and class” (3). Whether real or imagined, “national origins” are usually understood as an important member of this triumvirate. However, they play a rather ambiguous role in Zeitz’s study. Throughout the book, Irish and Italian Catholics are identified separately (Zeitz typically refers to “Irish and Italian Catholics,” rather than merely Catholics), but Zeitz offers no sustained examination of national origins within the Catholic fold. His tantalizing suggestion that over time, “Irish and Italian New Yorkers constructed a more united cultural and social front,” receives little further explanation (12). With Jews an only ambivalently “national” group, readers might ask whether this is really an account of the role of religion—rather than ethnicity—in social life and politics. The haziness of the book in this regard should provoke fuller explorations of the place of nationality in postwar ethnicity.

Second, Zeitz is needlessly stark in his discussion of ethnicity and race. Suggesting at the outset that historians have erred in “grafting race so tightly to ethnicity,” Zeitz goes too far in prying the two apart (5). Even as they soured on civil rights and gravitated to politicians advocating “law and order,” Zeitz suggests that New Yorkers were expressing the reality that the city had become a “difficult place to live,” rather than concerns

about race per se (147–156). But here Zeitz’s claims, heavily reliant on opinion polls, fail to convince. Segregation and discrimination were hardly invisible to white ethnic New Yorkers before the 1960s. Instead, they made choices that exacerbated these patterns. For example, residential segregation reflects widespread residential choices and broad based exclusionary practices. Although Zeitz acknowledges the existence of “grassroots” resistance to integration, he fails to include this resistance in his portrayal of white ethnics (150–155). What did Jews and Irish and Italian Catholics say (and do) about residential and employment discrimination in the early postwar period? Did they differ in their opinions or actions? Zeitz offers little of the fine-grained analysis of the early chapters in answer to these important questions. As a result, *White Ethnic New York* misses a chance to reframe discussions of postwar racial politics from a perspective that is attentive to ethnically inflected worldviews. However, future scholars are likely to thank Zeitz for this oversight, as both the strengths and weaknesses of the book leave readers with enticing questions. A book likely to prompt others, *White Ethnic New York* is a most welcome addition to the nascent literature on postwar urban ethnicity in the United States.

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Dimitry Anastakis. *Auto Pact: Creating a Borderless North American Auto Industry, 1960–1971*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 240 pp.

If there was anything that you ever wanted to know about 1965’s Autopact but were afraid to ask, then this extremely well-researched, written and conceived book is for you. Based solidly on archival documents, supplemented with interviews, including one with Simon Reisman, the agreement’s Tasmanian devil cum negotiator, and an extensive secondary bibliography, *Autopact* takes the reader behind the scenes and into the discussions among those involved on both sides. Dimitry Anastakis focuses almost exclusively on those events that led into the Autopact, as well as its aftermath, but especially on the negotiations themselves. As a result, he writes, this book is not about the period’s political and economic history except insofar as it impinges upon the march to Autopact happiness, at least for the Canadians. While a few other recent contributions to the historiography have dealt with elements of the agreement, for example, my own *Dancing Around the Elephant* (2007) and Greg Donaghy, *Tolerant Allies: Canada and the United States, 1963–68* (2002), Anastakis’ contribution is the first historical work to deal exhaustively with the subject. Given its thoroughness, there need not be another.

Clearly, the agreement was important for Ontario—the province was the big winner in the Autopact sweeps, even though Queen’s Park, completely and utterly disinterested in what was being negotiated in 1964, was not a part of the story. Trade agreements were federal matters and provincial politicians