

Christopher J. Galdieri. *Stranger in a Strange State: The Politics of Carpetbagging from Robert Kennedy to Scott Brown.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2019. xiii, 237 pp. (\$85.00 cloth).

The term carpetbagger has had negative connotations ever since defeated Confederates hurled it at Yankees who had come South to make their fortunes after the Civil War. In politics, the term is equally negative when directed at candidates who move to a new address in order to scratch the itch of ambition by running in a jurisdiction in which they have few if any ties. Christopher Galdieri traces out the efforts of nine carpetbaggers who pursued Senate seats during the half-century beginning with Bobby Kennedy in 1964.

The success rates of Galdieri's subjects will not inspire others to attempt a second act in a new state. Only Kennedy and Hillary Clinton made it to the Senate. One of the subjects, Liz Cheney, who had a tenuous connection with Wyoming, aborts her effort when her family name and access to campaign funds fail to drive Mike Enzi into retirement. Harold Ford, after Hamlet-like hesitancy, opts not to contest Kristen Gillibrand's bid to extend her tenure in the seat to which she was appointed. Of those who undertook a campaign but lost, Scott Brown's effort at a reprise in New Hampshire two years after losing his Massachusetts seat to Elizabeth Warren comes closest. Alan Keyes, the last-minute replacement for the sex scandal-tarnished Jack Ryan, turned in the weakest performance as Barack Obama trounced him on the way up the ladder to the presidency.

One is tempted to conclude that the key to a carpetbagger overcoming accusations of naked ambition is to have a famous name and run in New York since the only two winners, Kennedy and Clinton, share those characteristics. In the final chapter, Galdieri goes beyond those obvious features and suggests eight conditions that will enhance the prospects for a carpetbagger to triumph over the handicap of newcomer status. Most of these, however, are not within the control of the candidate. For example, the candidate cannot keep others from entering the primary or convention or get the state party to offer an invitation or to have national recognition. The last chapter also has a shorter list of factors for leaders of a state to ponder before courting an outsider.

Given the poor record of carpetbaggers, especially those not moving to New York, why does anyone attempt to restart or launch a Senate career or salve the sting of defeat, by moving to a new state? Galdieri's answer is that while the prospect for a carpetbagger victory is poor, it may be the best option available. Kennedy's heritage was in Massachusetts where his family had a record of electoral success. But brother Ted stood between Bobby and the Senate and the older brother had no interest in becoming Bay State governor. He had tasted the wine of national politics and he wanted more. Others, like Harold Ford and Scott Brown, had come close in their original states. But with the path to office no longer open there, they were receptive to the idea of restarting their careers in a new venue.

While only two of the candidates included in this research reached the Senate, Liz Cheney's candidacy did produce a reward although not her original goal. Her unsuccessful Senate flirtation led to the House two years later when the incumbent retired.

Unfortunately, this volume had already been written when a third carpetbagger won election. Galdieri references the potential candidacy of Mitt Romney which has come to fruition with the former Massachusetts governor now representing Utah in the Senate. Like Kennedy and Clinton, Romney had national visibility and was welcomed into the state to which he relocated. He did, however, have to win the nomination in a primary, unlike the two successful New York transplants, yet the primary opponent offered only token opposition. Moreover, Romney, like the New Yorkers and unlike Bill Brock and James Buckley, had not served in Congress and therefore did not have to explain roll call votes that played well to the initial constituency but were out of step with the values of the state they hoped to represent.

Interestingly, having past ties to the state does not smooth the path for the carpetbagger. Bill Brock had long since decamped from Tennessee and lived in Maryland yet performed poorly as a Senate candidate. James Buckley grew up in Connecticut and owned a home there but that did not help him when he sought to rekindle his Senate career following rejection in New York.

A necessary but not sufficient condition for success is when the prospective carpetbagger is welcomed, even courted by a political party that needs a candidate and finds no local aspirant acceptable. The case of Alan Keyes, a failed Maryland candidate, provides Galdieri's best example. When this occurs, two "best of a bad situation" coincide. Neither the party nor the candidate has a better option.

Galdieri keeps his task manageable by examining the challenges and campaigns of nine Senator hopefuls. If he should undertake a broader study in the future, he could document that the same kinds of charges get hurled at candidates for lesser offices who are not currently rooted in the constituency they hope to represent. In the most expensive congressional contest ever conducted, Jon Ossoff (D) narrowly lost the special election in Georgia's Sixth Congressional District with the decisive factor being that even though he had grown up in the district, as a candidate he lived just minutes outside the district. On the other hand, numerous members of Congress have continued service after redistricting removes their homes from the district that reelects them.

The volume describes the campaigns of the nine candidates along with the way in which the carpetbagger and the other issues in the campaign played out. The forces in the state's political constellation, the strengths and vulnerabilities of the carpetbagger and the opponents are described.

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