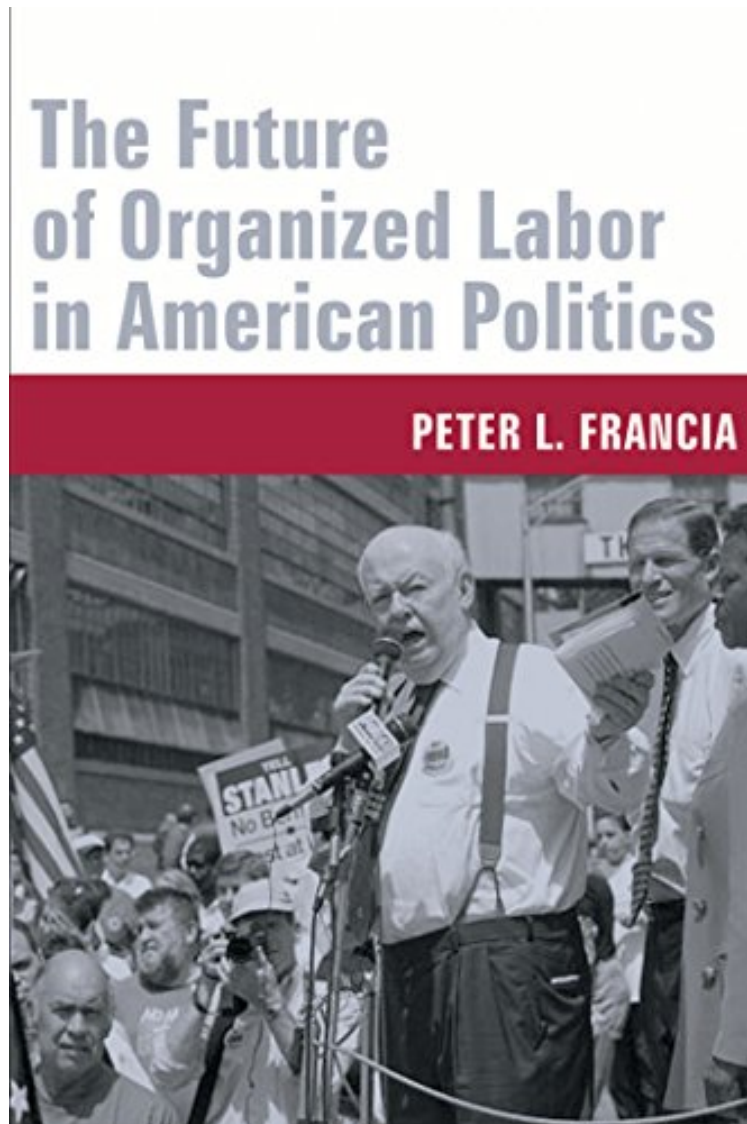


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The Future of Organized Labor in American Politics

Peter L. Francia

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Peter L. Francia : The Future of Organized Labor in American Politics before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Future of Organized Labor in American Politics:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. greatBy TellTheTruthExcellent book for college class.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well Thought Out AnalysisBy John MatlockF.D.R. was able to put together a coalition that enabled the Democratic party to win the presidency several times since. But it now appears that the old grouping has lost a lot of its power. This book discusses the effect of the unions falling membership and falling influence in the political process.Much of the book is on the efforts of John Sweeney who was elected to the presidency of the AFL-CIO with the platform of increasing political power. His actions towards increasing grass roots

efforts have indeed led to greater political impact for unions on a member by member basis. However the overall and continuing decline in membership is creating a limitation on just how much power they can exert. Mr. Francia was a political worker for the union for a time, and has continued to be interested in union politics. He is also an assistant professor of political science at East Carolina University. It's interesting reading. It promises to be an interesting few years in the political process of the country. The country seems quite annoyed with Bush, but didn't elect many Democrats. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very good contribution By KCCThe political activities of organized labor and their impact in American politics have received very little attention from political scientists. This is a pity given the important role that organized labor still plays in American elections. The Francia book takes a much-needed look at this subject by comparing the leadership of the AFL-CIO under the two different presidencies of Lane Kirkland and John Sweeney. The book demonstrates that Sweeney's emphasis on grassroots strategies (or what Sweeney calls "People Power") has helped organized labor remain a viable political force despite declines in union density. While there are some points that the author could have expanded upon, the book is still very good and definitely worth reading.

In 1995, promising a more active political presence for unions, John Sweeney was elected president of the AFL-CIO. Labor would develop a "new voice," one that could not be ignored or taken for granted by Democratic and Republican politicians. However, by the summer of 2005 opposition to Sweeney's leadership threatened to divide the labor movement. In *The Future of Organized Labor in American Politics*, Peter L. Francia discusses the effects of Sweeney's controversial tenure as president and assesses labor's influence on American political elections and legislation. Drawing on interviews with union and business leaders, as well as campaign-finance and public-opinion data, Francia argues that Sweeney has employed a more effective and expansive grassroots political operation than his predecessors. He challenges critics who dismiss Sweeney's efforts as a failure but cautions that the decline in union membership presents a serious crisis for the labor movement. When unions emphasize "grassroots" strategies they can effectively compete against the financial power of big business and can make a significant difference in congressional politics. Francia analyzes organized labor's political activities, its coalitions with other interest groups, and its influence on voter turnout, election results, and votes in Congress. He also examines the effects of Sweeney's embrace of progressive causes and labor's increasing willingness to challenge Democrats who vote against labor's interests. For all his successes, Sweeney's tenure has not been without its problems. Labor's presence in American politics is threatened by shrinking membership in unions. Francia suggests that if unions want to remain a viable political force in congressional politics, they must devote more resources to organizing workers.

A must read. (Marick F. Masters *Journal of Labor Research*) Francia's book should be read by all. (Gerald Friedman *Labor History*) About the Author Peter L. Francia is associate professor of political science at East Carolina University and the coauthor of *The Financiers of Congressional Elections: Investors, Ideologues, and Intimates* (Columbia). He lives in Wendell, North Carolina. He has written articles for *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *American Politics Research*, and *Social Science Quarterly*, as well as co-authored chapters in several books on organized labor, interest groups, and congressional elections.