

his tweets “inappropriate” and indicative of “bad manners” (p. 205). Yet although Trump tweeted in ways that even his supporters found objectionable, they continued to support his campaign, finding myriad ways to justify his words and actions (p. 186). The findings of chapters 7–9 taken together reveal an interplay between Trump, news coverage, and supporters. As candidate—and later as president—Trump antagonized the media, calling them out and differentiating their rhetoric from his own, while simultaneously reinforcing his supporters’ approval of his campaign and their own disillusionment with the news media.

Perhaps the most interesting data in the book center not on Donald Trump but on Hilary Clinton, his opponent in the 2016 presidential election. On the one hand, chapter 8 reveals that the press, reinforced in citizens’ letters to the editors, was more apt to refer to Donald Trump and other presidential candidates by their last names. But Senator Clinton was called “Hillary,” and her first name was used more often than that of any other presidential candidate (p. 177) since 1948; in addition, media referenced her marital status more frequently than her title of “Secretary of State” (p. 144). Both practices served to reinforce gender stereotypes and exemplify the difficulty faced by the first female presidential candidate of a major political party. On the other hand, even though Clinton was much less likely to exaggerate than Trump, she was also much less insistent in her own rhetoric (p. 106). Instead, she jumped from issue to issue and did not underscore the same clarity of message that her opponent did. Indeed, it is these data that make me wonder whether the 2016 presidential election campaign was less about Trump’s rhetoric (however interesting it was) and more about the role that gender played—and the campaign oversights made by candidate Clinton—in shaping its outcome.

*Trump and Us* is rich with description, and the comparative tables help place Trump’s rhetoric in context with that of other candidates. At times, however, compelling comparisons are absent; for example, why not compare Trump’s exaggerations with Gore, another purported exaggerator? And, elsewhere, assertions—for example, that Trump connects with voters on a deeply personal level—remain underdeveloped. Moreover, because the book lacks a strong theoretical frame, we simply do not know why voters may have been responsive to Trump because of his manner of speaking. We have often speculated that there is something about Trump’s rhetoric that is different, and indeed, this book supports this contention. But it remains unclear as to the impact Trump’s rhetoric had in motivating 43% of the electorate to support him in 2016 and maintain that support for him as president. Fortunately for the author, this leaves open the possibility for still more research on this topic, perhaps by crafting a study on *President Trump’s* rhetoric.

Setting this minor criticism aside, *Trump and Us* makes a valuable contribution to our fuller understanding of

Donald Trump’s 2016 campaign rhetoric. Whereas we may have always thought so, Professor Hart now provides us with clear quantitative evidence that Trump was a populist who spoke simplistically and with anger in a paranoid style. Hart writes extremely well, and his work is accessible to a wide range of students of presidential rhetoric, campaigns, and elections. This book is rich with descriptive data, and its argument and findings should be incorporated into virtually all scholarship on rhetoric in presidential campaigns.

### **The Pro-Life Pregnancy Help Movement: Serving Women or Saving Babies?** By Laura S. Hussey. Lawrence:

University of Kansas Press, 2020. 328 pages. \$34.95 cloth.  
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I cannot wait to teach this book.

As a professor who engages students in the interdisciplinary study of reproductive law and politics in the United States, I am always looking for texts that combine rigorous analysis of contemporary practices surrounding abortion with humane and compassionate treatment of the activists and women involved. In my courses, I keep open the question of whether pro-life feminism is possible; therefore, I look for ways to introduce information about woman-centered, pro-life, feminist perspectives. And I seek texts that make a clear argument but provide openings for students to respectfully challenge interpretations and apply a competing frame of analysis. Laura Hussey’s book is a terrific example of rigorous mixed-methods political science that has clearly stated research questions and processes, as well as outstanding data visualization, and it is written so generously that it will provide us with hours of conversation.

Hussey adopts and builds on Zaid Munson’s (2008) sociological conception of the four “streams” of the pro-life movement, arguing that pregnancy help center volunteers fall within the “individual outreach” stream (p. 3); they have as their target not abortion providers, the state, nor the public—but, rather, pregnant women (p. 14). Hussey uses political opportunity theory to frame her data-driven analysis of this activism, drawing on her two national surveys (one of pregnancy help center staff, the other of center founders/leaders) and a smaller survey of local clients. Hussey also interviewed leaders/founders and staff and engaged in participant-observation at national conferences. The book includes compelling statements from activists about their work and motivation for it. The data are embedded within an exhaustive review of the literature surrounding anti-choice and pro-choice activism.

The book begins with an excellent networked history of the help center movement and a clear articulation of its

values and goals (chaps. 2 and 3). Most readers have no firsthand experience of pregnancy centers, and in the book, we learn quite a lot about them: who staffs them, where they are located, their physical layout, and the types of services provided. Hussey's discussion of motivations, strategies, and changing tactics in chapter 4 is exceptionally clear and interesting. She explains that contemporary pregnancy center leaders both demonize Planned Parenthood and—through processes of professionalization and medicalization—aspire in some ways to compete with that organization by adopting its tactics and approach.

Chapter 5, which examines the geographies and political cultures within which these centers flourish, asks us to make connections between service provision, access to abortion, poverty, and pro-life worldviews. As Hussey writes, “public pro-life sentiment, the favorability of pro-life activists' political opportunity structure, and the incidence of pregnancy centers initially seem to grow together” (p. 131); there are more pregnancy help centers in states where there are fewer abortion providers.

I particularly appreciate the way that Hussey highlights pregnancy centers' intervention into the seeming disconnect between pro-life politics seeking to constrain access to abortion and conservative politics in general, which seek to dismantle the welfare state. The book “challenges conventional wisdom that the US pro-life movement devotes little attention to the circumstances that prompt women to choose abortion and the concrete implications of ‘choosing life’ for women's lives” (p. 24). This is important, because much of the research on why women who want to be mothers choose abortion indicates that for many of them the decision is predicated on a lack of financial resources and other circumstantial pressures. It is also important from the standpoint of normative political theory, and Hussey's examination in chapter 6 of the politics and ideologies of movement activists is a great intervention into understanding social justice-oriented pro-life activism.

Crucially, Hussey's data also show us clearly that (contra the politics of abortion as they play out nationally and locally) there are those in the pro-life movement who resist pitting mother against fetus. Pregnancy center activists do want to reduce (and even eradicate) abortion in the United States, but they choose to focus on “serving women,” rather than “saving babies.”

It is seldom fair for a reviewer to ask a book to be something that it isn't, and I don't seek to do that here. But, as I read *The Pro-Life Pregnancy Help Movement*, I often saw places to expand, question, and redirect the research. The book is so empirically rich that I could see it becoming the foundation for several more, potentially very different, studies of the pro-life movement. I imagine a follow-up study much like Helena Silverstein's (2007) *Girls on the Stand*, which traced young women's experiences in attempting to obtain a judicial bypass for parental

consent for abortion, or Rose Corrigan's (2013) *Up against the Wall*, which showed the ways that rape reform failed to adequately serve survivors. Without being an exposé, scholars could build on Hussey's work to provide a “street-level bureaucracy” look into what happens in these centers from the perspective of the women served.

Hussey understands that not every woman's needs will be met by pregnancy help centers, that the Christian message received at them might not be welcomed by all, and that the metaphors used in some of the centers' training materials might diminish the very empowerment the centers are attempting to develop. This insight could be a terrific starting point for a more critical analysis of the paternalism inherent in some of the language, as well as for an analysis of pro-life and pro-choice uses of “empowerment feminism,” à la Nancy Fraser (2013).

Hussey's book will be a useful addition to scholarship on the pro-life movement, joining books like Josh Wilson's (2013) *Street Politics of Abortion* that seeks to understand the relationship of activists in that movement to the state and state law, and Carol Maxwell's (2002) investigation of the dual role of faith and lived experience in mobilizing pro-life activists. Hussey's final chapter beautifully explores the faith articulations of activists and leaders—and makes interesting interventions into religion and politics, disaggregating Catholic and Evangelical politics; there is potential here to expand on the relationship of “charity” to “justice,” articulated by project participants.

Certainly, Hussey's book should be seen in conversation with Kristin Luker's classic analysis of the worldviews of pro-life and pro-choice activists, *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood* (1984). The conversation between those texts would illuminate tremendous changes over the past 40 years, while also highlighting the continued relationship of professionalism and medicine to abortion politics and practices.

Finally, and, crucially, Hussey's book could be reframed and extended through an explicit reproductive justice lens. Her final footnote points in exactly this direction, citing Jennifer Nelson (*Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*, 2003), Dorothy Roberts (“Reproductive Justice, Not Just Rights,” *Dissent* 62(4), 2015), and others. An investigation of the impacts of pregnancy centers on communities and women of color, and the opportunity to articulate a reproductive justice explanation for their presence, would be an exciting contribution.

That Hussey's book raises so much potential for further scholarly analysis and suggests different frames to be taken on the data she collected is absolutely not a critique.

Rather, it is a celebration.

Laura Hussey has written a definitive take on the pregnancy help center movement, contributing to the building of political opportunity theory, while also

opening the conversation to those from different normative, analytic, and disciplinary perspectives. That is a service to our field indeed.

**Warped Narratives: Distortion in the Framing of Gun Policy.** By Melissa K. Merry. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020. 225p. \$70.00 cloth.

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The National Rifle Association, formed in 1871, is the nation's oldest gun organization. Its fundamental attachment to guns has never changed, but its messaging has. At some point in recent years, it began to identify itself as the nation's oldest civil rights organization, as its website proclaims. If groups like the NAACP and the ACLU somehow don't seem to be quite in the same category as the NRA, the gun group obviously discovered that this bit of rebranding would help legitimize its increasingly aggressive political activities. They're not just about shooting stuff but also about constitutional rights!

Branding, rebranding, and issue framing are, of course, central to understanding the white-hot politics of the gun issue, a fact rightly and insightfully understood by Melissa K. Merry in her new book. By her account, the framing choices of gun groups on both sides of the issue have warped the national gun policy debate and thus contributed to policy dysfunction. Gun safety groups “focus on atypical characters and settings” that “highlight white victims, child victims, and mass shootings in suburban locales,” whereas “gun rights groups focus on self-defense shootings, emphasizing threats to ‘law-abiding’ gun owners” (p. 2). Gun groups use this kind of messaging for an obvious reason: it resonates with their constituencies. The problem, however, is that these narratives warp a more accurate understanding of the role of guns. Gun murder is a serious problem, without question, but twice as many Americans die from gun suicide annually than from gun homicide, a fact often missing from their messaging. Among gun homicides, most occur in high-crime urban areas and are more likely to victimize people of color. Mass shootings are horrible by any standard, but they account for only about 1% of annual gun homicides. As for legitimate self-defense shootings, they do occur, but their numbers are usually wildly inflated and the narratives are dismissive of the blundering that too often occurs when amateurs with guns make split-second decisions about how to use them in real-life encounters.

Merry acknowledges the political calculations that lead gun organizations to use such warped framing, but that does not distract her from a deep dive into that murky process. She examines the communications of 15 gun organizations (amounting to more than 67,000 documents)

and does so in an array of media outlet modes from 2000 to 2017. She organizes this massive and diverse database around three theoretical perspectives: the narrative policy framework, the social construction of target populations, and critical race theory. Merry emphasizes that these gun group strategies are perfectly rational from a political perspective, but that in the process they warp the gun policy debate.

The book's chapters progress logically: chapter 2 examines framing theory and its application to gun policy; chapter 3 focuses on the pivotal role of gun policy interest groups; chapter 4 expands on the aforementioned theoretical frameworks; chapters 5 and 6 examine the portrayal of gun policy victims and perpetrators, respectively; chapter 7 brings in the author's prodigious empirical evidence on portrayals of gun violence, linking it to group strategies; and the final two chapters discuss the implications of earlier findings, including brief consideration of how policy warping occurs in other policy areas' debates.

The notion of victimization weighs heavily in the messaging on both sides of the gun debate. Gun safety organizations emphasize narratives centered on white victims, especially when those victims are found in lower crime areas, and child victims (these two often converge in school mass shootings). Gun rights organizations paint gun owners as culture war victims—misunderstood, demonized, marginalized. Victims must, of course, be victimized by perpetrators, and too often perpetrator framing falls back on stereotypical views of terrorists and the mentally ill. Both of these framing elements contain some element of truth, although regarding terrorism, invocations of radical Islam are much more likely than of home-grown terrorists, despite the fact that domestic terrorism is the more serious threat. That said, “perpetrators constituted minor characters in gun policy groups' narratives” (p. 116). Yet this may be an instance where data limitations miss part of the picture, because Merry's data cannot speak to the mindsets of group adherents and the larger public.

Merry's chapter on settings, denoting the context in which policy problems are raised, again emphasizes the predominant messaging used by various gun groups. Drawing on her vast dataset, she parses six possible types of gun violence and accompanying messaging: accidental shootings, domestic violence, mass shootings, suicides, self-defense shootings, and urban violence. Predictably, gun safety groups place great emphasis on mass shootings. Suicide gets little attention, in part at least because of the societal stigma attached to it. (Note, for example, that obituaries almost never report suicide as a cause of death for fear of prompting additional suicides and attaching unwanted stigma to families.) Gun rights groups heavily emphasize self-defense uses and, to some degree, urban violence—sometimes with an implicit racial subtext attached to the latter. Merry notes that these findings are