

motivation behind their foreign policy. As I have argued elsewhere, I do not believe that the neoconservatives are a homogeneous group, or that the neoconservatives in the Bush Administration share the same motivations, even when they agree on the same policies (see “Straussians in Power: Secrecy, Lies, and Endless War,” in *The Political Ideas of Leo Strauss*, 2005).

In response to Xenos, it is important to point out, first, that criticizing America and wanting to change her does not make one un-American. By insisting on the un-American nature of neoconservatism, Xenos unconsciously adopts the same rhetorical McCarthyism often deployed by the neoconservatives against critics on the left. Second, being anti-democratic does not make one a fascist. Indeed, suspicion of the “tyranny of the majority” has always been a component of American liberalism. Third, fascism is not as easily defeated as Xenos believes; he can summarily dismiss it because he associates it with Nazism. But for Strauss, Nazism was a corruption of what Heidegger called the “truth and greatness” of fascism. Heidegger was referring to the Nazis, but Strauss thought that the Nazis did not represent fascism, properly understood. In my view, Strauss embraces fascism properly understood as a wholesale rejection of liberal values—especially individuality and critical thinking, which are replaced with community, family values, and a self-

less, unquestioning, and unwavering devotion to the nation and its God. I believe that fascism, properly understood, is not a uniquely European phenomenon. On the contrary, it beckons every democracy, as the rallies of Sarah Palin have recently illustrated. This explains why Strauss had such a receptive audience in America.

Unlike Xenos, I side with Strauss in thinking that liberal democracy is seriously flawed. But I also believe that Strauss’s “cure” is worse than the disease. It is the fascistic nature of that cure that requires critical examination. What is wrong with fascism is not that it is un-American or undemocratic, as Xenos maintains. What is wrong with it is that it is a rabid form of nationalism that deifies the state; promotes the surrender of one’s intellect to the authorities; endows democratic majorities with a fatal certainty in their own self-righteousness; encourages simple folk to believe that there is no good other than their own and their nation’s; and glorifies war and struggle in the interest of the nation, no matter how partial, iniquitous, or unjust.

In many ways, Xenos is a victim of the secrecy that has lowered the level of intellectual discourse between the defenders and critics of Strauss. But he is also a victim of his valorization of democracy, which leads him to assume that fascism is by definition antithetical to democracy.

AMERICAN POLITICS

Attack Politics: Negativity in Presidential Campaigns Since 1960. By Emmett H. Buell, Jr., and Lee Sigelman. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008. 336p. \$34.95.

The Persuadable Voter: Wedge Issues in Presidential Campaigns. By D. Sunshine Hillygus and Todd G. Shields. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. 268p. \$32.95.
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— Yanna Krupnikov, *University of Michigan*

Recent years have seen more and more research on campaign effects, likely due to increases in both campaign spending and data quality. This work has approached the electoral campaign from various angles: What types of voters are persuaded by campaigns? Why do certain issues garner so much candidate attention? Why do candidates employ certain tactics? While these questions differ (albeit in some cases very slightly), they are united by an overall goal—the effort to determine if (and how) campaigns matter. *The Persuadable Voter* and *Attack Politics* are the latest entries in this line of research and, at their core, both books attempt to solidify our understanding of the relationship between candidate strategy, campaign dynamics, and political outcomes.

Focusing on a campaign’s role in voter decision making, *The Persuadable Voter* is an ambitious undertaking. In addition to analyzing the conditions under which campaigns will influence voters, D. Sunshine Hillygus and Todd G. Shields also seek to leverage this understanding of voter behavior into an explanation of candidate strategy. It is the titular “persuadable voter,” they argue, that leads candidates to highlight certain issues (or conversely, ignore other issues) on the campaign trail.

The book begins with a focus on voters. In particular, Hillygus and Shields argue that in any campaign there are “cross-pressured” voters—voters who must choose between competing considerations. One population of such voters are individuals who identify with one party but disagree with that party on an important issue (for example, Republicans who support stem-cell research or Democrats who oppose abortion). These cross-pressures create a unique possibility for persuasion when a candidate of the opposite party can pinpoint the issue at the heart of a cross-pressured voter’s conflict and show that the candidate of the voter’s own party is at odds with the voter on this particular issue. Activating these cross-pressures, the authors argue, can lead the voter to vote against their own party in a given election.

Using different data sources and approaching these sources from different directions, Hillygus and Shields show

that cross-pressured voters do exist and, subsequently, that when cross-pressure is applied, persuasion is possible. This analysis of voters is both thorough and largely convincing.

The idea of the cross-pressured “persuadable” voter translates easily to candidate strategy. As the authors argue, activating cross-pressures is exactly what candidates seek to do. Relying on archival data and a unique data set of campaign mailings, they trace the way candidates identify potential groups of cross-pressured voters and prime specific issues to activate these cross-pressures. Here, too, they present considerable evidence and make a generally convincing case.

In sum, campaigns seek to win by persuading those individuals most likely to cross partisan lines. This conclusion, the authors argue, is a sharp contrast to existing research that paints campaigns largely as forces that activate the partisan base. While Hillygus and Shields offer some compelling insight into persuadable voters, the potential importance of these voters to any campaign leaves one with questions about the limitations of the underlying mechanism.

Precisely how central, for example, must an issue be to the individual’s belief system in order for a candidate to activate cross-pressures? Further, how much activation is needed to bring such a given issue to the forefront? Once activated, how lasting is this persuadability? Do voters retain memory of these cross-pressures from one campaign to the next? Finally, how important is candidate credibility to a candidate’s ability to persuade? The intriguing results in *The Persuadable Voter* offer a strong foundation for future research to tackle these questions regarding mechanism, but also to continue the complex analysis of the relationship between campaign strategy and voter behavior.

While Hillygus and Shields focus on the reciprocal relationship between voter decision making and candidate strategy, in *Attack Politics*, Emmett H. Buell and Lee Sigelman present an in-depth examination of candidate motivations and behavior. The stated goal here is to “determine the overall negativity of every presidential contest from 1960 to 2004” (p. 26).

Buell and Sigelman approach this task by dividing the campaigns into four categories of competition: the “run-away” campaign, the “somewhat competitive” race, the “comeback” contest, and the “dead heat.” Classifying each campaign from 1960 to 2004 as falling into one of these four categories, the authors undertake an exhaustive analysis of each of these 12 contests. While the focus here is on attacks, in order to situate these attacks in a broader political context the authors fill out each campaign with rich stories of candidate motivation, behind-the-scenes relationships, and complex political machinations.

To consider the timing and content of attacks, the authors rely on a data set of *New York Times* campaign coverage. This data set is constructed using all published

pieces that relate to the campaign, and it includes not only coded news stories but also reprinted press releases, speeches, and campaign advertisements.

This use of the *New York Times* is notable. As Buell and Sigelman point out, using a mainstream newspaper as a data source makes room for types of campaign discourse (for example, discussions of polls) that are commonly missing in research that relies directly on campaign advertisements or speeches. In addition, the *Times* coverage allows the authors to simultaneously consider both campaign advertisements and statements made about the candidates by various public figures. This approach provides, arguably, a fuller picture of campaign attacks. Yet this data set is not without limitations—which the authors acknowledge. Since they seek to trace attacks, relying on the *Times* coverage in effect documents only the attacks that the newspaper deems newsworthy. This approach works to limit the observations in the data set: Not every attack that is transmitted directly to a voter via an advertisement or a speech will be deemed important enough to publish. As the definition of newsworthiness is inherently fluid and journalistic decision making often murky, it is difficult to determine what exactly is left out of this data set and whether these missing observations have any systematic effect on the analysis.

Despite the limitations of this data set, the effort to consider every detail and nuance of campaign attacks is truly breathtaking. Candidate decisions and motivations are documented and placed in the broader historical and political context of each campaign. These rich descriptions not only show who launched an attack but also explain why an attack occurred at a specific point in time, how other political actors responded to the attack, and the eventual political fallout.

Buell and Sigelman are explicit that their goal is to analyze and explain the dynamics of campaigns 1960 to 2004—something they achieve with a superb level of detail. Looking past the goals of this book to the study of campaign effects in general, however, a reader may wonder how the analysis in *Attack Politics* might translate to future work. The book outlines numerous campaign-specific factors that explain why and when an attack happened in each of the 12 particular cases. While this works well within the scope of the authors’ goals, the sheer depth of detail leaves a reader questioning the extent to which the results are generalizable, and wondering what this study implies for future studies of political contests.

Perhaps, as Buell and Sigelman suggest in the conclusion, the most effective translation to future work is not the findings themselves but the general approach of this study—an approach that considers each political contest individually, rather than focusing on broad variables that attempt to unify all campaigns under umbrella explanations. This is a useful method and one that has been very fruitful here. Nonetheless, if we seek to understand

campaign effects in general, and candidate strategy in particular, it is likely that both broad umbrella variables and particularized studies such as this one are necessary. To this end, Buell and Sigelman provide a crucial foundation for future work, as it is rich description of the type presented in this book that allows scholars to derive more general hypotheses.

Opposition and Intimidation: The Abortion Wars and Strategies of Political Harassment. By Alesha E. Doan.

Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007. 232p. \$60.00 cloth, \$21.95 paper.
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— Cynthia Burack, *The Ohio State University*

In *Opposition and Intimidation*, Alesha E. Doan focuses on the militant, confrontational, and sometimes violent tactics that constitute part of the repertoire of pro-life activists. Between 1998 and 2004, Doan conducted interviews in Texas with individuals on both sides of abortion clinic-related protests as well as with others, like police officers, who were drawn into protest-related conflict. Supplemented with historical and contemporary data about abortion and anti-abortion activism, the material from the author's interviews reveals the ideology and motivations of those who become involved in pro-life activism, as well as the emotions and motivations of those who find themselves targeted by pro-life activists. The subject matter of the strategies and tactics of the anti-abortion movement is important for many social scientists, not only those who have a specific interest in abortion politics or reproductive rights history.

Doan's key theoretical claim is that conventional concepts in sociology and politics are insufficient to enable us to understand contemporary anti-abortion movement politics, that there is a "gap in our knowledge" that constitutes an impediment to understanding pro-life activism in its complexity and consequences (p. xi). To repair this gap, Doan offers a new concept, "political harassment," but this concept is more difficult to define and operationalize than the author suggests. For Doan, the features of anti-abortion activism that are key dimensions of the new analytic category are that nongovernmental actors are both targets of the movement's direct action and bear its costs (p. 24); that the ultimate goal of the movement is policy change, even though many activists devote themselves to goals that are not immediately political (p. 31–32); and, that the existence of violence in the movement creates a reasonable fear on the part of targets that they will be objects of violence, even when the direct actions they encounter are not violent (p. 108). At times, the author emphasizes the importance of "inflammatory rhetoric" on the part of anti-abortion protesters (p. 28), although the argument as a whole does not seem to require that women seeking abortions or clinic workers actually experience nox-

ious or threatening rhetoric. Rather than clarify the parameters of political harassment, however, the definitions and illustrations expose problems with the concept's scope and application.

One problem associated with political harassment as a new conceptual category becomes plain when Doan pivots between two quite distinct uses of the notion of "reasonable fear." One involves intentionality on the part of anti-abortion actors; political harassment occurs when activists set in motion "collective challenges intended to . . . create a reasonable fear" on the part of those they target (p. 131). The other does not require intentionality on the part of pro-life activists but refers to what clinic employees and women patients report—an "environment of fear"—as a result of knowing that some pro-life activists commit acts of violence (p. 108). Implicitly, throughout the analysis, this second, subjective, use of "reasonable fear" trumps the first.

By drawing attention to this distinction, I do not mean to suggest that what pregnant women and clinic employees actually experience as a result of their locations in the larger struggle over abortion is unimportant. Clearly, we have much to learn about the effects of various forms of political acts on those who become their targets.

However, the unexamined analytical distinction between, on the one hand, what anti-abortion protestors do (or intend to do) and, on the other hand, what vulnerable patients and clinic employees feel or experience does call into question the clarity and usefulness of the concept of political harassment as a way of explicating political formations. Pro-life violence has occurred and is likely to occur again. Given that context, if women who seek abortions feel threatened by the attentions of pro-life activists, we are bound by Doan's theory to judge that these women are being victimized by political harassment *regardless* of the nature of the acts under consideration. It is not obvious that such a move enhances our understanding of either the big picture or the micro-politics of pro-life activism.

The theoretical term that Doan considers and rejects as an alternative to political harassment is unconventional political tactics/participation, a broad analytic category that encompasses violence but also includes a wide range of other forms of direct action such as boycotts, blockades, demonstrations, and sit-ins. Previous scholars of abortion morality politics use this concept to account for pro-life activism, and a telling distinction between it and political harassment is that the concept of unconventional political tactics focuses our attention on the acts in which social movement actors engage. There is no denying that many of the tactics of anti-abortion activists—screaming at women outside clinics, blocking access, acquiring and publicizing personal information about clinic workers and women who seek abortion services, disseminating personalized wanted posters that target health care workers—constitute harassment. Whether they are executed by lone