unfolds, it is unclear how this educative experience informs a move from what Joan Tronto calls "caring about" to "doing the work of care." That, as Nancy Fraser, Mignon Duffy, and Jennifer Nedelsky have recognized, will require significant intervention in the existing relationship between markets and states. Second, although we may join Fraistat in his concern about the potential excesses of authority on the part of caretakers as "educators," we are more likely to worry about the potential exploitation of caretakers as nursing assistants or public school teachers under COVID. A more focused engagement with some of the recent work on care ethics would position Fraistat to speak to both sets of concerns.

AMERICAN POLITICS

Firepower: How the NRA Turned Gun Owners into a Political Force. By Matthew J. Lacombe. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021. 312p. $29.95 cloth.
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— Alexandra Filindra, *University of Illinois–Chicago*
aleka@uic.edu

Observers of gun politics have long noted that much of the National Rifle Association's (NRA) political influence comes from its ability to mobilize its members effectively. Journalistic accounts suggest that gun rights supporters inundate the offices of elected officials with calls every time a bill noxious to the NRA's agenda is introduced. Yet, going back to Mancur Olson's 1965 book, *The Logic of Collective Action*, studies of interest groups have warned how difficult it is to sustain collective action among the public. In *Disarmed*, Kristin Goss (2006) showed that gun control activists have been unable to generate the kind of sustained enthusiasm and commitment required for policy change. So how has the NRA succeeded where many others have failed?

To answer this question, Matthew Lacombe draws on social identity theory. A perspective in psychology that has recently made inroads in political science, social identity theory argues that people have an innate need to belong and behave as group members. According to Lacombe, organized groups such as the NRA build identities by vesting membership not simply with material benefits, but also with positive traits appealing to current and prospective members. In this case, gun owners are "law-abiding citizens" and "peaceable" Americans. This identity-building encourages members to "see themselves as a distinct social group and feel emotionally tied" to other members (p. 22). Group opponents are depicted in undesirable terms, in this case as "elitists" and out of touch. Negative depictions of opponents create an "us vs. them" context, increasing the emotional distance between the two groups and hardening intergroup boundaries. The NRA has further empowered this gun owner identity by linking it to other important identities such as gender, race, and religion (p. 178).

Creating a social identity is not by itself sufficient to turn an organization into a political influencer. According to Lacombe, the NRA has been a successful political player because it "politicized" its members' social identity. The association vested the gun owner identity with political meaning and created linkages between being a group member and various political attitudes and policy preferences. It has successfully disseminated this identity and related ideology through popular programs geared to the general public—from kids' gun safety to adult concealed-carry training—programs that the NRA monopolizes. In effect, in the context of practical skills programs, the group teaches participants what it means to be a good gun owner and what political groups and policy ideas fit in with that understanding of the self. The in-person socialization acts to further cement people's ties to the organization through identity development (p. 229). Finally, organizations can use identities to mobilize their members politically. Group members tend to respond to threats to their identities, and the politicization of the gun owner identity suggests that action in the domain of politics is the appropriate response to neutralize the threat.

The creation of a gun owner social identity and its embeddedness in a gun-centric ideology with linkages to other political issues have served the NRA well in multiple ways. First, the organization has implicit agenda-setting power: anticipating a vocal response from NRA members, politicians are more hesitant to introduce legislation inconsistent with its preferences. Second, the NRA is an essential player in electoral politics because its members are active at the voter booth and are primarily single-issue voters. Third, by investing gun ownership with an ideology, the NRA has successfully linked its core concern (gun rights) to other issues such as crime, enabling the association to develop strong coalitions within the broader conservative space and become a pivot player in Republican Party politics.

Lacombe seeks evidence that the NRA has cultivated a social identity and a gun-centric ideology in a clever and careful analysis of texts from the 1930s to the twenty-first century. His methodology includes content analysis based on machine learning and plagiarism algorithms that compare across texts and identify the level of similarity. Public opinion data are also interspersed in the chapters to help make broader claims.

Lacombe's analysis of the editorial columns of *American Rifleman*, the NRA's flagship monthly magazine, shows

that the NRA uses a distinct vocabulary to describe the in-group and adversarial out-groups. He also shows that the NRA's ideology shifted in the 1960s and 1970s. Before then, the NRA tied the importance of gun ownership to "collective security" and military preparedness, whereas since the 1970s—and even more so since the 1990s—it has focused on the Second Amendment as a guarantee against domestic tyranny. Furthermore, the text comparison technique shows that letters to the editor supporting gun rights are more likely than letters supporting gun control to employ identity-based language and use arguments and frames that the NRA used in earlier communications.

Analysis of the legislative process in both eras suggests that the NRA effectively mobilized its members (to the dismay of elected officials) and achieved significant legislative changes that frequently gutted key provisions, making federal gun control laws all but unenforceable. Lacombe asserts that a "subtle—but important—form of NRA influence" is its ability to get "policymakers [to] write weaker bills in the hope of avoiding a pro-gun mail campaign while also often including NRA-favored provisions that actually *weaken* existing aspects of gun regulation" (p. 135). Early on, it achieved its aims with no lobbying budget—a remarkable feat.

Survey analysis using national datasets further supports the contention that NRA members hold views about the media and the courts that mirror NRA beliefs. Based on the tight and careful identification strategy used in the text analysis, Lacombe suggests that we can assume that the direction of the effect flows from the NRA to the public. The NRA's ideas and gun owner identity have permeated the broader gun community, not only a few highly engaged members who write letters to the editor. What is more, Lacombe presents evidence that the NRA has more than infiltrated the Republican Party. During the Trump era, the NRA, through its tight hold on its mass membership, may have become the party's ideological leader.

Firepower is an important book not only because it substantiates one key mechanism through which the NRA exerts influence on politics, but also because it raises many new questions. For example, it is disappointing that the reader does not get a very good sense of who the NRA really is, despite the archival material. One chapter is called "The NRA's Quasi-Governmental Phase," but Lacombe's discussion is not very enlightening. Yet, "quasi-governmental" is a vital clue that suggests an access to power that is typically unavailable to membership groups such as the ACLU or the Brady Campaign. Similarly, how did the NRA come to be a quasi-monopoly in guns-related programming? Offering in-person services and being the only game in town are not the same thing, and very few membership organizations can achieve such a status. These issues are important because they suggest that creating a political identity may not be sufficient for attaining NRA-level success.

The mystery is compounded by Lacombe's suggestion of a temporal symmetry in NRA influence despite fluctuations in its membership levels. If the NRA achieved its goals with few members in the 1930s, why invest in recruiting millions? Could its members in the early part of the century have been qualitatively different—more influential—than later ones? Or did the NRA have avenues of influence then that were no longer available later? Lacombe's study documents one key source of NRA influence, but he leaves behind clues that suggest a much richer underlying tableau. To understand the NRA's influence, we need to embed the story of political identity-building into the broader historical context that gave rise to the association and allowed its ascent to political primacy. Only through contextualization can researchers determine whether this is a unique case or a model for building influence that other groups can effectively follow.

Overall, Lacombe's book is a worthy read because it provides a new lens through which to view the NRA and the development of the gun rights movement more broadly. Its reorientation of the discussion from material and partisan to psychological processes makes *Firepower* an important addition to any syllabus on gun politics and interest group politics.

The Man of the People: Political Dissent and the Making of the American Presidency. By Nathaniel C. Green. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020. 408p. $50.00 cloth.
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— Mel Laracey, *University of Texas at San Antonio*
Melvin.Laracey@utsa.edu

This book makes a notable contribution to the exploration of a fascinating historical question: How, so very soon after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, did a conception of the office of the presidency arise that was fundamentally at odds with the philosophy of most of the authors of that Constitution—and then became the dominant conception of the office?

As is well known, most of the framers were Federalists. As Green so aptly describes it in *The Man of the People: Political Dissent and the Making of the American Presidency*, the Federalist political philosophy involved several key precepts: "the obedient, compliant citizenry; the aloof executive; [and] the insistence that direct public civic engagement began and ended with voting in elections" (p. 98).

Yet just 12 years after the ratification of the constitution in 1788, Thomas Jefferson rode into office on a wave of democratic populism that represented an entirely different, "plebiscitary" conception of the office that has been described and analyzed by scholars including Theodore Lowi, Bruce Ackerman, and Stephen Skowronek. In this conception, "the American people were not the complaisant, deferential servants that Federalists insisted they