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Book Review: Michael M. Franz, Paul B. Freedman, Kenneth M. Goldstein and Travis N. Ridout, Campaign Advertising and American Democracy. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2008. \$74.59 (hbk); \$24.95 (pbk), xiv + 197 pp. ISBN 1 592 134 556 (hbk); ISBN 1 592 134 564 (pbk)

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‘party in public office’, a theme much debated by political scientists but mentioned only intermittently by Russell.

Labour’s organizational history has often been a series of skirmishes between those who want intra-party democracy and those who see an autonomous parliamentary leadership as essential for electoral success. However, as Labour’s individual membership has halved in a decade to just 200,000 (accounting for 2 percent of Labour voters in the 2005 general election) and with the unions organizing only a quarter of the workforce (principally in the public sector), the legitimacy of internal Labour democracy is thinner than it has ever been. If internal democracy has any long-term future in the Labour Party, it may involve the use of primaries open to all Labour supporters. Who knows? Perhaps New Labour could present them as a ‘third way’ between membership democracy and parliamentary oligarchy.

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Michael M. Franz, Paul B. Freedman, Kenneth M. Goldstein and Travis N. Ridout, *Campaign Advertising and American Democracy*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2008. \$74.59 (hbk); \$24.95 (pbk), xiv + 197 pp. ISBN 1 592 134 556 (hbk); ISBN 1 592 134 564 (pbk).

Many journalists, pundits and commentators have concluded that campaign advertisements – most notably the dreaded 30-second television spot – are a scourge upon American campaigning, and politics generally; they are allegedly the cause of many of the ills that supposedly plague American elections. The complaints are many; including that television ads drag down debate in campaigns, that campaigning has become more negative and nasty because of television ads and, most importantly, that TV ads have a harmful impact on democracy because they turn potential voters off politics, contain little if any informative power, and drive down turnout on election day. Beyond simple commentary, there is some scholarly evidence that lends support to this conventional wisdom and causes increased concern about American democratic elections.

On the other side of the debate, however, there are those who argue that campaign ads do not have these types of devastating effects. And, in *Campaign Advertising and American Democracy*, Franz, Freedman, Goldstein and Ridout take on the conventional wisdom as forcefully as any scholar or group of scholars have to this point. Their work is a forceful defence of televised campaign advertising that includes tests of familiar hypotheses with new and innovative data.

The authors test hypotheses related to whether exposure to TV ads leads voters to become more informed (*informational hypothesis*), to become more interested and have higher levels of efficacy and trust in government (*system*

support hypothesis), to participate in elections (*engagement hypothesis*). In other words, they go beyond rejecting the conventional wisdom and argue that TV ads are actually beneficial for elections and democracy. The greatest challenge to the conventional wisdom comes in their hypothesis that negative ads are more beneficial in the aforementioned areas than positive ads (*negativity hypothesis*). The authors also hypothesize that ads will affect individuals differently. Specifically, that advertising will be felt most among those with lower levels of political information (*differential hypothesis*), and that independents are more likely to be affected by exposure to ads than partisans (*partisan hypothesis*).

The authors present their hypotheses after a solid discussion of the theoretical basis (on multiple levels) behind them and some of the most recent empirical work on the topic. However, they do not spend a great deal of time reviewing existing literature, which is a strong point of the book. The authors make their case and move on to the heart of the book, which is the data, analysis and hypothesis tests.

Campaign Advertising and American Democracy is an important addition to the body of knowledge on campaign advertising for many reasons. While many readers will be familiar with some of the findings because of the authors' (both individually and in different combinations) prior work, this book still represents one of the most rigorous examinations of the effects of campaign advertising published to date. One of the hallmarks of the book is the data employed to track the individual TV ads aired by candidates, parties and interest groups during the election cycle (the data were collected by the Wisconsin Advertising Project with the help of TNS Media Intelligence/Campaign Media Analysis Group [CMAG]). While the authors have relied on these data elsewhere, this work is more detailed and more comprehensive. As important as the ad data, if not more so, is the authors' incorporation of multiple sources of survey data to create an individual-level measure of advertising exposure to test their hypotheses and 'examine how political advertising affects individual behavior' (p. 43). This is a powerful advancement for scholars. Moreover, the process for linking the CMAG data to individual-level survey data is clearly detailed, which will allow others to replicate this work in the future.

The authors spend an entire chapter (Chapter 3) laying out critiques of advertising exposure measures used previously, including: campaign spending, archived ads, data from television stations on specific purchases of advertising time, experiments, individual recall based on survey responses and other proxy measures. As one would expect, the authors methodically explain why 'none of these methods is adequate to the task of making valid inferences about the impact of campaign advertising' (p. 35). Then, in Chapter 4, the authors introduce their exposure measure based on the CMAG data. One initially gets the sense that the CMAG data are the 'gold ring' of TV ad data. Of course, the CMAG data do have their limitations (including that ads in only the 100 largest media markets [out of over 200 total] in the United States are tracked); to their credit, the authors address several of the concerns with the ad data as well as their measure of exposure later in that chapter.

Another strong point of the book is that the authors do not simply jump into the results of their hypothesis tests. Rather, they devote an entire chapter to more descriptive results, including very rich data on the media markets that saw the most ads in 2000 and 2004, as well as the tone (i.e. the percentage of spots

that fit into the classifications ‘attack’, ‘contrast’ and ‘promote’), sponsorship (candidates, parties and interest groups) and timing of ads. These data are beneficial not only to scholars, but in the classroom as well.

Much of the commentary on, and scholarly examination of, campaign advertising today is focused on the comparison of negative and positive ads. This is the great debate: are negative ads worse for campaigns, elections and democracy than positive ads? While the authors get to a discussion of this topic, they refreshingly examine campaign ads generally to test whether the presence of ads – minus any effect for tone – impacts individuals in the areas of information, feelings towards the electoral process and efficacy, and participation. In doing so, the authors test the informational, system support and engagement hypotheses in separate chapters; at the end of each they turn to the differential and partisan hypotheses.

In many cases, the authors do not find a great deal of evidence to support their particular hypotheses, especially the differential and partisan hypotheses. This is not the case for their hypotheses regarding learning and turnout, however; they also report some evidence to support their claim that ad exposure influences feelings about the electoral process. The clearest results are for the informational hypothesis, where the authors find that: ‘Television advertisements can help increase the aggregate store of politically relevant information voters have at their disposal’ (p. 86). Their investigation of ad tone and the differences between positive and negative ads also reveals important findings, even if they do not support the stated hypothesis in every case. For instance, the authors report that ‘it is primarily exposure to negative and contrast ads that facilitate (an increase in political) knowledge’ (p. 125), while they also report that ‘exposure to positive or negative advertising was unrelated to evaluations of the electoral process’ (p. 127).

While some of their hypotheses related to their general argument that campaign ads are beneficial for democratic elections are not supported, this does not mean that the book is devoid of important findings. On the contrary, the significance of many of the findings lies in that they are a clear rejection of the conventional wisdom about television advertisements. In only the rarest cases do they show a relationship between ad exposure and one of their dependent variables that would fit the conventional wisdom. The authors make note of this, saying:

We did not find large and significant positive effects in every case, but, having examined a large collection of attitudes and behaviors, we found only a single instance (the probability of displaying a bumper sticker or yard sign) in which campaign ads have what could be seen as a negative effect on democratic citizenship. (p. 138)

On balance, the evidence favours the authors’ contention that campaign advertisements serve a vital democratic function in the form of informational supplements (or ‘multivitamins’ as the authors call them). Specifically, the authors:

... found that exposure to campaign advertising in general, and negative advertising in particular, produces citizens who are more interested in the election, have more to say about the candidates, are more familiar with who is running, and ultimately are more likely to vote. In short,

people can and do learn from television ads, and campaign advertising thereby fulfills a vital democratic function. (p. 138)

The authors' argument is strong, but the book is lacking in a couple of important areas. First, the authors chose not to report the full results of their regression models in the text. Rather, they only reported the effects of the variables related to ad exposure and their other hypotheses. This certainly focuses the reader on the most important variables, which is appreciated. However, the authors might also have reported the full models somewhere in the book for those looking to replicate (or advance) their work. Second, in some cases, the reader is left wanting more. The data available to the authors are so rich, the reader may feel like there was more that could have been done.

In short, this book is a vigorous defence of campaign advertisements, and Franz, Freedman, Goldstein and Ridout make a strong case for their general argument that they are beneficial to elections and that they help inform the debate. To be sure, this is only one study of campaign ads, but the data and findings presented in *Campaign Advertising and American Democracy* will certainly continue to stimulate the debate about the effects of televised campaign advertisements.

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**Richard Sandbrook, Marc Edelman, Patrick Heller and
Judith Teichman, *Social Democracy in the Global
Periphery. Origins, Challenges, Prospects.* Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2007.
ISBN 13 9780521686877.**

Globalization is generally thought to have seriously limited the ability of left parties in office to sustain generous welfare systems and egalitarian social policies. Both neoliberal and 'Third Way' thinkers have argued that if European social democratic parties are to deliver economic growth, they must abandon state interventionism and redistribution and adapt to new market-oriented realities. If this is true in the wealthy North, then the chances of sustaining a successful social democratic politics in the poor South, where the constraints imposed by global markets are surely greater, would appear to be negligible.

Not so, argue the authors of this new book that should be read by all those who hope that Margaret Thatcher was wrong to declare that 'there is no alternative' to *laissez faire* economics. Of course, the neoliberal thesis that globalization has spelt the end for any kind of distinctive left-of-centre politics in the social democratic heartlands of Western Europe, has been shown to be way off the mark. Authors such as Geoffrey Garrett, Carles Boix and Dwane Swank