That said, I think there are two points at which those who are critical of Geer's argument can aim in developing systematic and through analyses. First, the discussion in the book justifiably focuses on content while not systematically dealing with the other elements of the advertisements, including but not restricted to the background music and visual elements of the advertisement. In the case of the Willie Horton Ad, for example, perhaps the most controversial part of it was its visual elements rather than its factual elements. Second, Geer's analysis cannot address the one element of ads that is probably of most concern to observers and analysts alike—*how* truthful are the claims made in negative advertisements, even when they provide evidence? Those who follow presidential campaigns closely understand that many of the votes ''against taxes'' or ''against a women's right to choose'' are often procedural votes, for instance, not to mention the fact that the evidence is often taken completely out of the context of other votes. While Geer would rightly point out that the opposition is not required to provide both sides of the story, his critics might reply in kind—that with both sides in a race tossing about partial truths and the media selectively clearing up only some of them, that the ultimate consequence is the withdrawal of voters from the political system.

Whatever your particular perspective on the question of negativity, there is no doubt that this book is essential reading. It is thoughtful, interesting, and full of evidence that is badly needed in this literature.

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Campaign Advertising and American Democracy. By Michael M. Franz, Paul B. Freedman, Kenneth M. Goldstein, Travis N. Ridout. (Temple University Press, 2007.)

doi:10.1017/S0022381609090641

In 1997, now more than a decade ago, I attended what I fondly refer to as the ''political advertising showdown'' at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association in Washington, D.C. The tension in the room was palpable as academics disputed the effects of negative advertising and the supposed detriments of political ads more broadly. As a graduate student, I was lucky enough to be a fly on the wall and the third author on Richard Lau and Lee Sigelman's meta-analysis of negative advertising that challenged conventional wisdom that negative ads damage democracy. Shanto Iyengar was in the other proverbial corner, having found evidence through experiments with Stephen Ansolabehere that negative political ads have various ill effects on the electorate. This raucous debate was my first foray into just how exhilarating political science could be. A recent book, *Campaign Advertising and American Democracy*, by Michael M. Franz, Paul B. Freedman, Kenneth M. Goldstein, and Travis N. Ridout, is the newest installment in this continuing saga, and its methodological and substantive contributions are significant.

Campaign Advertising will enjoy preeminent standing in the literature and become a proseminar staple given its scope, creative methodology, care given to situate the findings in existing literature, and the fact that it builds upon John Geer's new classic, *In Defense of Negativity: Attack Ads in Presidential Campaigns* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), to include elections for lower office. While the methods and approach are probably too advanced for most undergraduates, it is ideal for graduate students and established academics who study the subject.

Franz et al. examine the influence of political advertising on three dependent variables: citizen information about campaigns, support for the political system, and voter turnout. The authors find that campaign ads actually educate, engage, and mobilized the American electorate. These findings apply to positive ads as well as negative and contrast ads. (Negative ads that involve purely personal attacks—only a smidgen of the total—were found to have deleterious effects on citizens.) In short, the authors openly challenge the conventional thinking that campaign ads are a ''corrupted form of democratic discourse'' (1). Furthermore, Franz et al. argue that campaign ads are more important than ever for candidates to convey their messages to voters considering that media coverage is dominated by the horserace.

Campaign Advertising tests many different hypotheses and concludes that ads improve factual knowledge about political campaigns; that the effects are greatest with voters who start with low information; that greater exposure to campaign advertisements produces increased trust in government (but not political efficacy); and that greater ad exposure increases participation along the lines of voting (but not the willingness to post a yard sign, sign a petition, or talk to a neighbor about the election).

In terms of negative advertising, Franz et al. find an amplified campaign knowledge effect, which they attribute to the passionate nature of such ads and their comparatively greater issue content. They also

discover a positive link between exposure to negative ads and voter turnout in the 2000 election, but not in 2004.

Franz et al. use data from the Wisconsin Advertising Project from the 2000 and 2004 election cycles that furnishes information about the frequency of ad play and content (tone, the objective of the ad, sponsorship, which issues are discussed, adjectives used in the ad, etc.). The top 75 and 100 media markets are included in the 2000 and 2004 datasets, respectively. The authors use four additional datasets to produce a more precise measure of ad exposure, based on the number of ads run during the television shows each respondent watched. This enables Franz et al. to get around the limitations of using archival information (missing information about the frequency of ad showings), ad buy information (incomplete records from local television stations and the exorbitant time it takes to gather these records), experimental manipulation (limited external validity, especially in terms of ad exposure), and individual-level recall (poor memory of ad exposure and ad content that is colored by preexisting interest in candidates).

Beyond superior methodology, Franz et al. do a particularly good job describing the literature on theories of public opinion formation, participatory decline, the negative advertising debate, and campaign finance reform. They also provide interesting insight into recent elections: many more political ads were run in 2004 than in 2000; the 2004 Bush-Kerry election was more negative than the 2000 Bush-Gore race; 527 ads were more negative than ads sponsored by the parties, and both were more negative than ads from the candidates themselves.

One shortcoming of *Campaign Advertising* is the firm manner in which the findings are initially presented, which are later complicated with mixed outcomes for a few tests. Another critique is that Franz et al. could have greatly expanded the field with sustained analysis of demographic heterogeneity. The authors do test for differences between low- versus high-information citizens and partisan effects, but the analysis could have been stronger with inclusion of the standard demographic battery. The book might also benefit from systematic evaluation of candidate- and campaign-specific variables that may be independently influencing the dependent variables. Do the effects of campaign ads vary by candidate gender, race, age, incumbency status, or other such variables? Are citizen information, engagement, and participation influenced by other campaign efforts, such as mass mailers, or the amount and type of campaign media coverage in a given election?

Franz et al.'s *Campaign Advertising* represents the most comprehensive contribution to one of the most robust debates in our field. Perhaps it will inspire another APSA "showdown" on questions that are so vital to the health of American democracy.

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Unconventional Wisdom: Facts and Myths About American Voters. By Karen M. Kaufmann, John R. Petrocik, Daron R. Shaw. (Oxford University Press, 2008.)

doi:10.1017/S0022381609090653

Political scientists have long decried the news media's handling of American elections. Generally overly simplistic (and sometimes misleading), such coverage often paints campaigns as contests for particular demographic groups, set against a national backdrop divided into blocks of primary colors. In this smartly written book, Kaufman, Petrocik, and Shaw call "conventional wisdom" into question, wading through discussions of "soccer moms" and "red and blue states" to explain what the talking heads—and some academics—get right, what they get wrong, and what they frequently overlook entirely.

Like Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope's (2005) *Culture War?*, the book is a sophisticated, yet accessible examination of the American political landscape. The authors take a bit of a different tack from other similar efforts, focusing on seven subjects related to elections and voting behavior, and picking out myths that "are evidently important to the general public" (8). The opening chapter discusses the origins of these misconceptions, describing a system in which media coverage and the actions of political pundits combine to propagate their existence and acceptance. A particularly effective passage is geared toward the undergraduate or casual reader, chronicling political science's development and fall from popular attention, while simultaneously offering a clear and forceful statement of what political scientists do, and why they are uniquely poised to offer the public more accurate understandings of electoral politics.

In chapter two, the authors use the American National Election Studies series to examine partisanship (the ANES provide the data for most of the empirical analyses), thereby introducing the dominant theme of the book: the electorate may be uncomfortable with parties, but such loyalties remain central to how individuals make political choices in the United States. Indeed, Kaufmann, Petrocik, and