should not be surprised that there have been shifts within the parties. Different groups are ascendant because they have grown in number, not because they have usurped power rightly held by others.

Claassen also speaks to arguments concerning political polarization at the mass and elite levels. He shows how the activist pools within each of the parties and the overall population can move in contrary directions. Consequently, the activists can simultaneously become less like the overall population and become more accurate representations of their own groups. We can see what looks like an increased polarization of politics at the elite level that is not reflective of any changes at the level of the masses.

Claassen also serves as a needed corrective to the large-scale casting aside of the religious left. Claassen shows how religiosity and the attendant behavior we expect from the religious can push in opposite directions depending on the nature of the religious group. As we would expect from all that has been done to this point, we should not be surprised that the more frequently one attends an evangelical church, the more politically conservative one is. Similarly, but perhaps a little surprisingly given the leadership of the churches, mainline Protestants who attend frequently are also more conservative. Frequent attendance pushes to the left for both Jews and black Protestants. This is an area that is worthy of greater investigation in subsequent work. We should look at the messages transmitted in the churches to see if the elites are leading this or if the people gathering together are influencing one another. Or whether, of course, it is some combination of both.

This is a book that should be on the shelf of every scholar of religion and politics. Moreover, it ought to be in our hands being devoured and digested.

Advance Access publication May 5, 2016

doi:10.1093/poq/nfw017

Stanley Feldman, Leonie Huddy, and George E. Marcus. *Going to War in Iraq: When Citizens and the Press Matter*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 2015. 248 pp. \$27.50 (paper).

MATT GUARDINO
Providence College

Stanley Feldman, Leonie Huddy, and George E. Marcus have written an important book that improves our understanding of how Americans form opinions during debates over military intervention. In clear and engaging prose, the authors contend that critical newspaper coverage of the Iraq War debate turned Democrats and Independents against the invasion, despite mixed and tepid signals from Democratic Party elites. Their careful empirical analysis grounds a strong argument about the broader need to complicate theories of partisan elite influence on public attitudes related to national security. In focusing on news

coverage during a crucial period of policy debate, the authors also contribute to an emerging body of political science research that takes media communication seriously in explaining public opinion.

In examining the effects of critical statements about Bush administration policy in papers like those owned by the Knight-Ridder chain and publications carrying Associated Press stories, *Going To War in Iraq* advances a democratically optimistic view of public capacities that counters both traditional political science models and popular images of easily led Americans. Coherently integrating political communication research with psychological models of effortful information processing, the authors claim that certain conditions will motivate people to carefully parse relevant messages in the media, and to act autonomously to express views about possible military action that contradict those of prominent elites.

The book's key empirical sections unfold in three stages: (1) a thorough description of public opinion that draws from the 2002 wave of an original three-year panel survey, supplemented by American National Election Studies and Pew Research Center data; (2) a content analysis of print and television news in the fall of 2002; and (3) an analysis of the links between self-reported media use, political knowledge, partisanship, and war support. The authors also devote a chapter to alternative explanations for Democratic and Independent opposition. With one exception discussed below, their analyses here put to rest the likelihood that pre-existing traits of frequent newspaper readers—rather than actual reception of news coverage—prompted their opposition to the Iraq invasion.

The book's argument hinges on the effects of information from the domestic, non-partisan critics (especially non-governmental policy and scientific experts, but also mid-level intelligence bureaucrats, and former military and Pentagon officials) who appeared more frequently in newspaper than in television coverage. Feldman and his coauthors also find that prestige papers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* presented more positive coverage of the administration's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) claims than did non-elite papers. This result is in tension with both popular notions of a liberal elite media and theoretical expectations that greater financial resources, better access to sources, and more highly educated audiences should result in more substantive, nuanced, and diverse policy coverage in these outlets. As a partial explanation, the authors argue that regional papers shut out from highly placed intelligence sources were better able to convey doubts about WMD emanating from mid-level intelligence officials. This finding nicely demonstrates the benefits of focusing on forms of media coverage that are rarely studied by political scientists, and resisting the temptation to assume that elite newspaper content is sufficient to capture the communications environment most likely to affect ordinary Americans' opinions.

The most significant drawback of *Going to War in Iraq* is its truncated content analysis. While the book's fine-grained story- and sentence-level

coding generated detailed and useful media data, the analysis covers a fairly small slice (about six weeks) of the period between the launch of the Bush administration's major strategic communications campaign and the March 2003 invasion. There is merit in the authors' argument that this period spanning the debate over the Iraq War congressional resolution was when public opinion was most likely to matter for elite decision-making. However, mass Democratic and independent support for the war continued to drop in later periods, and it is questionable whether domestic opposition voices made up a significant share of mainstream media coverage after Congress endorsed the use of force in October 2002.

In addition, the authors code only sentences pertaining to two specific administration claims: that Iraq and al-Qaeda were linked and that Iraq was working to obtain special aluminum tubes for nuclear weapons production. While the substantive importance of those claims is indisputable, this analysis leaves out a large number of statements that could plausibly have shaped public opinion. Would newspaper coverage seem that much more critical than TV coverage if a broader range of messages were included in the content analysis? The significance of this narrow focus in part comes down to theories of information processing: how common in the mass public is careful sifting of policy information, as opposed to more automatic acceptance or rejection of valenced messages (as John Zaller's pioneering model, and many conceptualizations of emphasis framing, suggest)? For example, even if they were motivated to engage in some level of systematic or central-route processing during this debate, would Democrats and Independents have necessarily weighted messages about the aluminum tubes significantly more heavily than messages about WMD in general that were circulated during the same period?

These limitations are related to broader issues of research design. Absent experiments that can confirm causal relationships suggested by observational analyses, claims that media coverage drives public opinion are arguably best supported with pooled survey and news content data analyzed longitudinally. Given the nature of the available data and study design, the authors must make a number of potentially problematic inferences. Individually, none of these inferences undercuts their argument significantly (and the authors provide reasonable justifications and caveats for many of them). Collectively, however, these problematic inferences recommend some caution in interpreting the authors' argument for causal effects. For example, the book relies on self-reports that have long been recognized as dubious measures of news exposure and reception. Research by Markus Prior and others suggests that self-reports tend to inflate the presumed news audience. However, it is less clear whether the magnitude or direction of misreporting differs for print and television. Given social desirability pressures, for example, some respondents might simultaneously overestimate newspaper reading while underestimating TV consumption. At the least, the authors would have done well to more carefully

justify these indicators and better support their contention that any measurement error in them is likely to bolster their argument.

In addition, the data the authors use to rule out the influence of general feelings toward war are not well suited to that purpose. All the survey questions included references to the war in Afghanistan, the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, or terrorists, and all were administered just after the September 11 attacks. This raises the possibility (if not the likelihood) of selection effects (i.e., that Americans more generally opposed to the use of military force [especially unilaterally] were both more likely to read newspapers and more likely to oppose the Iraq War than others). These measures also make it difficult to investigate the possible impact of predispositions specific to this policy domain. Perhaps many well-informed Democrats' (and, to a lesser but still significant extent, Independents') generalized skepticism toward military action (a finding that is well documented empirically) moved them to respond to anti-war messages from credible (domestic and foreign) non-partisan sources in a variety of media outlets. Accounting for what Zaller has termed "domain-specific" predispositions might have reduced (if not erased) Iraq War opinion differences between newspaper readers and TV watchers.

Ultimately, Feldman, Huddy, and Marcus present a well-executed study of public opinion and a well-written and plausible causal story. While the book contributes an important piece to the puzzle of pre-Iraq War opinion formation, much of its evidence is complementary to other leading accounts. As such, it represents a valuable supplement (rather than a substantial challenge) to what we already know about public attitudes during this case.

Perhaps the most significant contribution of *Going to War in Iraq* is how its rigorous analyses urge us to take newspapers—and the detailed, substantive political reporting they can produce—seriously, even as economic challenges and technological shifts continue to remake the nature of political communication. This is best exemplified by findings that indicate newspapers' virtually unparalleled capacity for investigative journalism and greater propensity to include the views of non-governmental experts. More broadly, the book suggests that public opinion and political behavior work would benefit from continued and increasing attention to media coverage. As the authors write, "there is a clear need to examine the way in which the press conveys to the public a range of elite voices, partisan and nonpartisan, and their competing facts and arguments in order to understand the conditions under which citizens are enabled to engage in fruitful reasoning that is independent of political elites" (25). In particular, the authors' integration of detailed content analysis (limited as it is) with multiple dimensions of public opinion offers a template for experimental designs that can place explanations on firmer causal footing while using reasonable facsimiles of political communication environments that most people encounter in the real world.

Despite limitations that are not unlike those of any large-scale study of public attitudes in concrete political settings, *Going to War in Iraq* provides a

systematic and thoughtful analysis that persuasively explains significant elements of mass opinion. Moreover, Feldman, Huddy, and Marcus do scholars, students, journalists, policymakers, and ordinary citizens a favor by raising the alarm about what American democracy may be losing with the decline of serious, broadly accessible newspaper reporting. This is a point that is too often lost amid breathless analyses and polemics touting the democratizing effects of digital media. While there is room for reasonable debate about some of the book's findings, there should be no debate that *Going to War in Iraq* is a significant and provocative addition to the growing literature on foreign policy opinion formation.

Advance Access publication May 5, 2016

doi:10.1093/poq/nfw018

Marc J. Hetherington and Thomas J. Rudolph. *Why Washington Won't Work: Polarization, Political Trust, and the Governing Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2015. 256 pp. \$85.00 (cloth). \$27.00 (paper).

SEAN J. WESTWOOD
Dartmouth College

When it comes to most policy debates, Americans are simultaneously polarized and profoundly ignorant. Recent work reconciles this contradiction by arguing that political polarization is primarily affective and not principled. But the affective turn in the work on partisanship largely focuses on measuring, bounding, and defining the nature of inter-party animus. Hetherington and Rudolph step beyond these exploratory questions to document how affective polarization changes and drives political preferences. This book is as important as it is timely.

Why Washington Won't Work begins by noting that traditional models of public opinion and polarization fail to adequately explain the strongly polarized views of political in-groups and political out-groups. Consistent with other work, Hetherington and Rudolph argue that although partisans may not understand the political policies of either party, they seem to think that their party is virtuous and good, and that members of the opposing party are untrustworthy and bad. In this setup, the electorate uses primal assessments to heuristically evaluate policies, representatives, and party identifiers. Hetherington and Rudolph sidestep the troubling implications of affective polarization on representation and democratic accountability to focus on measuring how partisan mistrust changes political outcomes. This is a logical choice. We must know how important and consequential the polarization of affect and trust are in order to address the limits they impose on democratic accountability.

The argument hinges on a simple but convincing model: affective divides among the electorate are focused (primed) by elites to generate/invalidate