

taking such an argument too far. For example, she argues that ethnic-based sentiments were primarily consequences, not causes, of the violence (pp. 102, 183). Yet the sadism involved in much of the violence and the targeting of children suggest deep passions, most plausibly rooted in ethnic identities, at play throughout. In addition, her argument about “the constitutive power of groups” (p. 174), while intriguing, cannot be tested with her data.

One of the primary conclusions of *Killing Neighbors* is that local knowledge is essential for understanding the dynamics of identity formation and violence. To accumulate this knowledge, Fujii conducted interviews with 82 people, 16 of whom were Joiners, in two *secteurs* of Rwanda. While the stories are thoroughly illuminating, and Fujii’s conclusions about the importance of personal relationships are compelling, her findings must be bracketed by the fact that the experiences of these 16 men, some of whom were probably recruited for inclusion in the study because they were mentioned by (and thus had ties with) previously interviewed subjects, from only two local communities cannot be considered representative of all Joiners, who probably numbered in the thousands.

Those readers searching for simple answers will be frustrated by *Killing Neighbors*. However, I do believe that Fujii would welcome that frustration. If we are to understand more fully genocidal tragedies, we must embrace that motivations are dynamic, and are rooted in local and personal realities.

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The Politics of Presidential Appointments: Political Control and Bureaucratic Performance by David E. Lewis. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2008. 312 pp. Cloth, \$60.00; paper, \$24.95.

Every now and again, a book comes along that challenges not only what you think about a topic, but how you and everyone else you know go about studying it. David Lewis’s latest offering is exactly such a book.

The Politics of Presidential Appointments takes a hard, empirical look at the efforts of presidents to control the bureaucracy through appointments, and the effects that these efforts have on the objective performance of different administrative units. The main conclusions can be stated rather succinctly. According to Lewis, the number of political appointees within an administrative unit increases when the presidency switches parties, and certain kinds of political appointees rise as the preferences of members of Congress and the president converge. Additionally, Lewis argues that agencies with higher numbers of political appointees consistently receive lower Program Assessment Rating Tool grades, a finding that would appear to confirm long-standing concerns about the impact of politicization on institutional competence.

The reason that this book is such a big deal, however, has less to do with the particular empirical regularities uncovered, and more to do with the rigor and creativity that this book exhibits. Lewis exploits an extraordinary range of unexplored and underexplored datasets. Drawing from the Policy and Supporting Positions volumes (aka the “Plum Book”) and the Office of Personnel Management’s Central Personnel Data files, Lewis is able to distinguish civil servants from political appointees throughout the federal government, and thereby compile the single most-comprehensive inventory of presidential appointees ever conducted. In terms of data collection alone, this is a monumental undertaking.

With these data, Lewis extends theoretical claims advanced by Terry Moe, Richard Nathan, Hugh Hecllo, and others about the organizational structure of the executive branch. Lewis does not simply recognize that presidents have cause to politicize the executive branch. He explores the precise conditions under which presidents are likely to do so. In so doing, he deftly shifts the debate onto more productive ground from where prior research on the topic had left it.

As with any path-breaking empirical work, elements of the analysis could be refined and/or extended. For instance, Lewis measures politicization by measuring the percentage of bureaucrats within an agency that are political appointments. It is not altogether clear, though, that this is the only way of capturing politicization. Depending upon the complexity of an agency’s tasks, its structure, or its age, presidential control might be accomplished through just a handful of key appointments. Another quibble: in his empirical analysis, Lewis moves straight from simple descriptive statistics to an incredibly complex error correction model that includes all sorts of transformations of the key covariates. As a reader, I would have found it useful to see the results from some intermediate models, and to read more about the empirical and/or theoretical justifications for introducing additional layers of complexity.

In the final analysis, moreover, it is difficult to assess how Lewis’s main findings bode for presidential power. We know that politicization is but one among many available strategies for controlling the bureaucracy. In lieu of appointments, presidents can restructure or eliminate administrative agencies; they can move agencies from one location to another; they can build altogether new agencies; and through both *ex ante* and *ex poste* mechanisms in the appropriations process, they can redirect funds across administrative units. An absence of politicization, therefore, could indicate that an agency has a great deal of independence and is behaving in ways that plainly violate the president’s wishes. Alternatively, it could indicate that an agency is freely abiding by the president’s wishes or that it is fulfilling the president’s wishes, but only because the president has found alternative ways to control it. Nothing in Lewis’s findings allows us to discriminate among these possibilities.

The Politics of Presidential Appointments does not close the book on the study of politicization. Scholars would do well to scrutinize the initial measures

of politicization offered, and to think more broadly about how politicization meshes with other presidential strategies of bureaucratic control. This book, though, represents a genuinely new age of empirical work on the executive branch, and it sets the standard by which all future work on the topic will be measured.

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