there is no *real* elephant by which to adjudicate who is or is not correct. In some versions of the parable, the participants devolve into conflict precisely because each attempts to articulate their perspective as correct and/or universal—the framework advocated in *The Time of Global Politics* seeks to avoid that outcome by accepting the radical contingency of temporal perspective and moving forward with that perspective, rather than seeking to resolve political reality in any final way.

On the other hand, there is not as much difference between the two works regarding the malleability of past and future or the importance of each. The framework advocated *The Time of Global Politics* is one where the present shapes and creates past(s) and future(s) which seems very much in line with Bachner's perspective. The present—or should I say these presents—create past and futures that attach to each. And while it is true that these pasts and futures cannot be invented in just any fashion, they equally do not necessarily have any correspondence with the universal past or future which Bachner seems to assume exists to adjudicate the validity of political claims and observations. Alternatively, the framework advocated in *The Time of Global Politics* is largely agnostic about the ultimate reality of any depiction of temporal experience. This agnosticism is born out of a philosophy of time, but more directly, an understanding of politics as constructed and constitutive of reality. This is where I differ from Bachner—while they assert a "quasi-eternalist" sense of time, I do not, because that eternalist sense of time presumes the existence of one reality which I argue is less appropriate when the focus is on globality and its manifold differences in political practice.

There is also some discrepancy between my position on social science and the way that Bachner characterizes it in the review. In the book, I am explicitly open to the possibility of social science, making claims across time, and devoting an entire chapter to reimagining prediction. What I am opposed to is the idea that one can assert traditional social science claims—namely timeless applicability of a theory and its predictive quality—while unquestionably accepting notions of time as dominantly practiced. One may indeed be able to make comparisons and even predictions between eras, but one must be much more specific and intentional in terms of theorizing the parallels that exist between two times and articulate why a prediction generated in one can effectively inform the other.

Differences aside, Bachner does make one point I wholeheartedly agree with—I do think that focusing on the narration of past and future—and present—in elections is something that much more clearly lends itself to measurement and assertions of reality versus foreign policy, international relations, or war, which are largely imaginary enterprises. I am not saying they are imaginary in the sense that they are not real or without real effect, but

that in order to function imaginaries must be in place. Without a shared imaginary of what "China" is—even if not finally universal—it is impossible to consider the possibility of relations between "China" and the "United States," let alone the possibility of "war" or "conflict" between the two. And as is the case with any imaginary, where and when it takes place are central to understanding how it functions in politics.

Warping Time: How Contending Political Forces Manipulate the Past, Present, and Future. By Benjamin Ginsberg and Jennifer Bachner. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2023. 158p. $70.00 cloth, $29.95 paperback.

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Benjamin Ginsberg and Jennifer Bachner's *Warping Time* is a fascinating and wide-ranging book that effectively makes an argument for the value and importance of time when considering the trajectory of politics. In equal parts, rigorous and approachable, the book uses a series of survey experiments to argue that the past, present, and future are all malleable resources that political actors can use to shape and constrain political possibility. Actors do this via reconceptualizing each time to influence the attitudes and opinions of the public. Ultimately, the authors argue that "our observations, which are generally supportive of Karl Popper's famous critique of historicism, suggest that history lacks directionality and can—and often is—revised and rewritten to more fully comport with present-day perspectives and future aspirations" (99). In other words, actors will deliberately—and effectively—alter their characterization of the past, present, and future to make their chosen political positions more widely supported, and thus likely to be enacted.

Ginsberg and Bachner come to three conclusions: the past is reinvented to shape the present, the future is imagined in specific ways to "stimulate action in the present" while the past is reinvented "to comport with an imagined future" (102). Their argument is intuitive and well-fleshed out, confirming some dynamics that many might imagine to be the case, but lack the evidence to prove. Ginsberg and Bachner's work seeks to provide exactly such evidence and identify the parameters of its influence. What it does well is show the boundaries of these dynamics, illustrating what is and is not possible for political actors to accomplish, as well as what is relatively more and less difficult. For example, they conclude that "'history lessons' could move contemporary policy preferences by an average of 16 percentage points; forecasts of the future could move contemporary policy preferences by

an average of 12 percentage points; and the two together an average of 21 percentage points" (97). In short, they not only show that altering collective perceptions of the past, present, and future matter but also to what extent they matter and how this interacts with broader factors such as ideology.

In addition to confirming some intuitions, they identify dynamics that are quite unexpected—namely, that people will not only change their mind about an issue when presented with a different version of the past/present/future, but they will also forget that they ever adopted their previous position. They write, "to give the entire matter an Orwellian flavor, in the case of history lessons, we estimate an average 'erasure effect' of 8.5 percentage points—the difference between those with long-held preferences and those whose preferences had been changed but seemed not to recall that they previously held other preferences" (97). Not only does altering one's conception of time shift one's policy choices but it also sends the idea that one could even think otherwise down the Orwellian memory hole.

The book advances its claim through a series of survey experiments, each related to the three themes of influence —how the past shapes the present, how the future shapes the present, and how the future also influences the past. In the experiments, participants are asked questions about policy issues, but for each issue, participants are split into three groups, two treatment and one control. The treatments provide varying statements about the area of time under study. For example, regarding how the future affects the present, they are presented with varying "forecasts" regarding the future and then asked a series of questions regarding their attitudes toward the policy issue. By varying the information/claims provided, they show how—even for those who resist the claims advanced, so-called "dissidents"—exposure to the varying representations of the past and future alter participants' policy preferences, sometimes quite significantly. The book usefully explores how extant ideology, education, preferences, and other factors have some impact on participants' receptibility to alternative characterizations of the past, to use one example. What they also do, however, is point out that people are generally inclined to agree with the information presented, as "decades of survey research have shown that most respondents are inclined to agree rather than disagree with an authoritative statement" (41).

Given its focus on public attitudes, it also, perhaps unsurprisingly, engages in discussions of popular culture and the forming effects those have on our understanding of the past and future. For instance, the idea of "time travel" that dominates in American society is one that relies upon specific understandings of time regarding its linearity and connectivity—for example, the *Terminator* can only go back in time to stop a war because the past *determines* the future and is inexorably connected to it. Film,

television, and textbooks are all offered as illustrations and "proof" of concept. Each of these discussions provides a useful entry point for those less invested in the models and/or looking for specific illustrations beyond the findings themselves.

Interestingly, the introduction and conclusion engage in a wide-ranging and surprisingly philosophical treatment of time and temporality, engaging ideas from quantum physics and the literature on the philosophy of time. The invocation of Karen Barad's work to show how Newtonian ideas of time dominate our colloquial approach to time was effective, as was the discussion of eternalism, the idea that all of space and time exist simultaneously. Typically, philosophers object to this idea on the basis that it is too deterministic, as the future, for example is already set and predetermined. Ginsberg and Bachner instead advocate a more middle of the road "eternalism without determinism" which is an intriguing concept (17). Regarding quantum physics, other scholars of politics have similarly begun to use Barad—as well as others—to offer a "quantum" approach to politics that seeks to destabilize this Newtonian and deterministic influence on our conceptions of science and physical reality. This book is operates in a similar register, albeit these claims are more implied, rather than explicit.

There were three areas where there could have been more development, conceptually speaking. One is the relationship between time and history—while this is an enormous area of literature to try and engage, there were times when the two were used somewhat interchangeably, which created some unanswered questions regarding collective memory, "the" past, and the boundaries of discursive formations. Along those lines, a second area warranting further discussion might be precisely this question of the relationship between discourse(s) and/or narrative(s) and public attitudes. While any one book cannot be all things to all people, readers familiar with these areas of research might raise questions regarding the relationship between attitude and policy, not to mention issues of power and inequality. Finally, in future research, some of the examples could more directly engage existing literature—for example, the discussion of textbooks and nationalism could be brought into conversation with scholars of nationalism who identify nationalism as something articulated by nationalists, rather than something already existing out there in the world to be manipulated. Defining the past and controlling its (re)production is a vital part of these projects, one intentionally and directly contested by intellectuals and other nationalist leaders and/or proponents. Equally so, there is a literature on temporality in politics—both recent and older—that could add significantly to the views here. Andrew Hom's understanding of timing, for instance, is well-developed and influential in international relations—and to be fair, mentioned in the book—and addresses some of the

unanswered questions here as do others in conversation with this area of scholarship. While this work does not address the substantive areas touched on by the book, it might help the thinking on some of the conceptual questions raised within and generate new directions for future experiments.

Overall, *Warping Time* provides a necessary and valuable contribution to the literature on time and politics, providing ample evidence via a less employed method of the centrality of time and temporality in politics. Those who control time, as evidenced by the novel *1984*, really do have the ability to control politics.

Response to Christopher McIntosh's Review of *Warping Time: How Contending Political Forces Manipulate the Past, Present, and Future.*
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—— Jennifer Bachner (iD)

Many thanks to Christopher McIntosh for his insightful comments and observations about our work. The review provides a detailed overview of the book's key argument and findings, and we greatly appreciate the comments about the contribution the book makes to scholarly understanding of time and politics.

In the review, McIntosh identifies several areas that could be further developed and clarified. The first is the distinction between history and time. As McIntosh notes, entire volumes have been written on the nature and philosophy of time as well as the different types of time. We argue in our book that there are two components of time - one that is separate from human consciousness and one that interacts with it. The first is universal – an inexorable march forward that can be measured objectively. The second includes history, the present, and the future in their full richness. These elements, in our view, are shaped by human efforts to create realities that serve their ends. Although we have tried to distinguish between the fixed and malleable components of time, McIntosh's point is well-taken and some additional clarification of our perspective would be useful.

McIntosh also suggests that we elaborate on the connection between discourse and policy attitudes. We agree that this would be an extremely fruitful area for further investigation. Specifically, it would be useful to better understand the causal mechanism at work. Although our experiments show a strong association between the treatments employed and policy attitudes, we can learn more about what caused the variation that we observed. In other words, we could explore the cognitive processes participants used to arrive at their answers. Did the additional information presented in the treatments change the balance of competing considerations for the participants? Or, did the new information in the treatments simply change the set of considerations available at the top of participants' heads, as Zaller's (1992) work would suggest?

Furthermore, how do the effects we uncovered generalize to the real world of information sharing? Are the effects we observed magnified by the increasingly partisan nature of media outlets and the strength of echo chambers in which information is consumed? Perhaps, there are heterogenous effects, as some people may be more susceptible to manipulation for various reasons. Additional experiments would certainly be useful to expand and refine the arguments in our book.

Finally, McIntosh suggests that our work engages additional literature, such as those on nationalism and temporality in politics. Indeed, there are several additional subtopics related to time and politics that connect to the key points in our book and are worth exploring. We look forward to continuing to explore these areas of study to develop additional insights into how historical and future-oriented narratives are constructed and contested within political discourse.