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Kathleen Hall Jamieson, **Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President: What We Don't**, **Can't, and Do Know**, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018, 314 pp., $17.95 (paperback).

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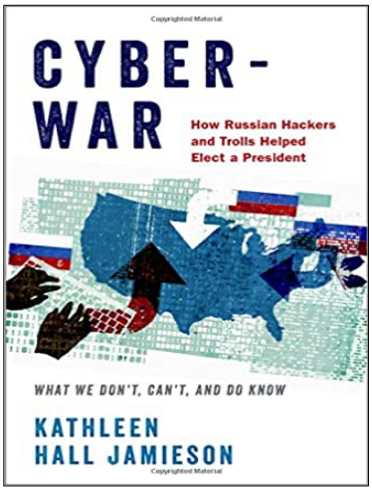

With her publication of ***Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President: What We Don't, Can't, and Do Know***, Kathleen Hall Jamieson weaves a captivating and informative breakthrough by answering the question: How likely is it that Russian hackers and trolls abetted the election of 45th U.S. President Donald J. Trump? Using an explanatory framework, Jamieson challenges this question with an in-depth study of the press uses of hacked content, Russian troll posts, polling data, and media effects research, concluding that it is probable that the Russians did help to elect Donald J. Trump. Conversely, the book is not just about what the Russians did but also exhibits how the U.S. news media unwittingly assisted the Russians in achieving their goal. Readers should find Jamieson's analysis to be of particular interest, especially as she contends that the United States is ill-prepared to prevent future cyberwar interferences.

The four parts and 10 chapters are divided logically, starting with U.S. susceptibilities and ending with the question, Where does this leave us? This book could be covered in an undergraduate or graduate public policy, political communication, or journalism course. Her transdisciplinary approach will appeal to educators and practitioners alike. The central concern is addressed within four parts: (1) Who Did It, Why, and What Research Says About How It Might Matter; (2) The Prerequisites of Troll Influence; (3) How the Russians Affected the News and Debate Agendas in the Last Month of the Campaign; and (4) What We Don't, Can't, and Do Know About How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect Donald J. Trump. The introduction contains a brief overview of the ways in which the Russians were able to "exploit the dispositions of reporters, the capacities of the social media platforms, and our nation's respect for a free market and championing of freedom of speech and of the press" (p. 16).

Part I: Who Did It, Why, and What Research Says About How It Might Matter provides thorough evidence that Russians were responsible for the activities of the trolls and hackers. This book contributes impressively to our understanding of how the Russians exploited social media users using the U.S. First Amendment. For example, no regulation existed for political advertising on social media; the First Amendment was used to create targeted advertising to hone and reshape public opinion. Since the Russians exploited American values, this inadvertently "made the United States more vulnerable" (p. 11) than other countries like France. France's government asked news organizations not to report on hacked content. The book could expand upon other countries besides France that were also exploited by Russia. Yet, in the U.S.,

the hacked emails influenced the media's focus and inadvertently reinforced Russian trolls' posts. The trolls posted what Americans were ready to believe. This caused a consuming synergy between the media, trolls, and social media users.

Jamieson provides a plethora of data on Russian trolls' trickery. For instance, Russian trolls used counterfeiting locations, names, and photos to disguise themselves as Americans. The trolls sent 202,973 tweets according to NBC News data (p. 5), and the troll volume on Twitter increased considerably after Trump became the Republican nominee. Automated accounts, known as bots, aided the trolls by affecting media agendas. Bots ran up "thousands of all-but-instantaneous 'likes' to accelerate the trending topics" (p. 13). Contrarily, to "smother a topic not to their liking, their masters can overwhelm trending hashtags with unrelated ones" (p. 13). In chapter 2, Jamieson argues that previous research supports that the messaging the Russians used and created "are capable of producing sizeable-enough results to alter a close election" (p. 17).

Part II: The Prerequisites of Troll Influence contains five chapters, each concentrating on five conditions that the trolls would need to execute changes to the 2016 election outcome: (1) widespread messaging; (2) a focus on issues compatible with Trump's strategic needs; (3) addressing constituencies he needed to mobilize and demobilize; (4) persuasive content that was amplified in swing states, visually evocative, and magnified by sharing, liking, and commenting; and (5) well-targeted content. The book contributes impressively to our understanding of how Russian hacking and social media messaging altered the content of electoral dialogue that contributed to Donald Trump's victory. Jamieson skillfully warns of how Russian social media messaging infiltrated through not requiring a "'clear and conspicuous' disclaimer indicating who authorized the ad" (p. 12) in 2016. Besides, the U.S. campaign finance regulations did not require digital platforms to disclose who funded the campaign ads (p. 10). Jamieson asserts that passing the Honest Ads Act could help disclose the authorizations of future political ads but did not state how passing the act could preclude future attacks. Instead, she offered regulatory and voluntary changes for social media platforms that encompass platforms to block fake accounts, remove past troll content, and notify law enforcement of such activities. In late 2017, the Federal Election Commission required political ads containing images or videos to disclose who funded the ad. Facebook now algorithmically fact-checks popular content that has been debunked (p. 219) by partnering with FactCheck.org, which Jamieson cofounded.

Part III consists of three chapters that highlight the exposure of how the Russians affected the news and debate agendas in the last month of the campaign. Jamieson provides a clear understanding of how the hacked content could have altered the presidential outcome through the message environment. Jamieson noted that the released Russian-stolen messages exposed Democratic oppositional research compiled about Trump. In addition, Jamieson provides a connection to the hacked emails with the debate questions. In the later debates, the moderator turned hacked content into questions damaging Clinton's candidacy (p. 188). Russia strategically held content that may have shaped the media agenda in the final week and a half of the campaign. Jamieson cites research by Thomas Patterson, whose results find that in the final two weeks of the 2016 presidential campaign, "negative reporting on Clinton exceeded that about Trump by 7 percent" (p. 190). Patterson confirms that the increase in Clinton's negative reporting was driven by the Comey coverage, "which accounted for one hundred stories, forty-six of them on the front page" (p. 191).

Part IV reminds readers about what we don't, can't, and do know about whether Russian hackers and trolls helped elect Donald J. Trump president of the United States. Jamieson organizes the existing public data on Russian messaging and hacking into an explanatory framework by describing the ways in which Russian efforts were aided by the press, social media, candidates, party leaders, and a polarized public. She offers keen assertions of how we can learn from the past, closing with a "klaxon-like warning" (p. 224). Jamieson alerts that we need to "find the wherewithal to translate forewarned into forearmed" (p. 224), for the future of the American electoral system is at stake. *Cyberwar* closes with a forewarning that "media systems, and electorate will find ways to reduce everyone's susceptibilities to the evolving weapons of cyberwar" (p. 224). The title *Cyberwar* insinuates that a war went on with retaliation between Russia and the United States, but the United States did not react against Russia. Perhaps, "cognitive hacking," a strategic cyberattack to manipulate people's perception by exploiting their psychological vulnerabilities, as a title would deepen the premise.

Since U.S. laws have not kept up with technology, Russia was able to interfere in the 2016 election by the use of hacking, trolls, and bots so that future cyberattacks may come. Combining efforts to help combat foreign interference is vital to saving U.S. democracy. Jamieson mentioned passing bills like the Honest Ads Act. Nonetheless saving America needs to move beyond this. Waltzman (2017) suggested that to counter Russian threats, a whole-nation approach is necessary. A whole-nation approach is a "coordinated effort between national government organizations, military, intelligence community, industry, media research organizations, academia and citizens organized groups" (Waltzman, 2017, pp. 4–5). A coordinated effort must take place, but there are many challenges to this, such as educating Americans on what happened and convincing Americans that the Internet Research Agency (IRA) endeavors in the 2016 election are not fake but real. Readers should begin with Jamieson's book, *Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President: What We Don't, Can't, and Do Know*.

Jamieson is regarded as one of the principle researchers in public policy. At the University of Pennsylvania, Jamieson is the Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor at the Annenberg School of Communication and the Director of its Annenberg Public Policy Center. Jamieson has authored many books, including *Packaging the Presidency*, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age*, *Spiral of Cynicism* (with Joseph Cappella), and *The Obama Victory* (with Kate Kenski and Bruce Hardy). Overall, Jamieson provides strong arguments and numerous insightful sources, and her book is recommended for researchers, professors, practitioners, and students interested in policy and social media messaging. Jamieson offers a thoughtful, sophisticated, and rich analysis of the explanatory framework of media effects. This book contributes impressively to our understanding of how Russian hacking and social media messaging altered the content of electoral dialogue that contributed to Donald Trump's victory.

Reference

Waltzman, R. (2017). The weaponizing of information. *Senate Armed Services Committee*. Retrieved from https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Waltzman_04-27-17.pdf