

of how elections are run in the United States, starting with the assumption that decentralized election administration has a uniform impact on turnout across the states. If election administration is decentralized across the states, then why do some enjoy significantly higher turnout than others, even when their election laws are similar?

The volume concludes with an overview of the PEI measure to showcase differences in the ways that U.S. experts evaluate electoral integrity in America compared to international experts. The authors show notable differences in how these experts view institutions, especially those that are criticized as being inherently undemocratic, such as the Electoral College. The authors claim that institutional structures, such as partisan gerrymandering, the Electoral College, and single member districts, create obstacles for reform. If that is the case, then centralizing electoral management and institutionalizing election openness is expected to increase electoral integrity by decreasing partisan competition. The role of political parties, however, appears to be assumed, and not explicitly accounted for. If political parties design electoral institutions and administer elections, and if electoral integrity varies across the states, then a discussion about how political parties design and administer elections is central for evaluating electoral integrity in the United States.

Electoral Integrity in America offers a useful overview of the key debates surrounding electoral integrity in the United States. Researchers should include this volume in their libraries, along with other texts that focus on U.S. election laws and measuring and administering elections in the United States, in order to draw from this volume's comparative frame and apply it across the American states. For example, how can scholars explain that perceptions about electoral integrity are found to have only very marginal impacts on individual attitudes about democratic satisfaction and voting participation (Table 11.2)? Can this be explained due to limitations in the use of the World Values Survey as a source to measure public opinion in the United States, or does it indicate further challenges in measuring "electoral integrity"? Such are the many interesting questions raised by this volume.

Predicting the Presidency: The Potential of Persuasive Leadership. By George C. Edwards, III. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. 288p. \$95.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.
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— Douglas L. Kriner, *Cornell University*

While congressional scholarship has long focused on the institutional arrangements that make legislative gridlock the norm in contemporary politics, an important strand of presidential scholarship from Richard Neustadt forward argues that presidents, through skillful coalition

building and public leadership, can break through the logjam and effect significant policy change. Popular expectations for presidential leadership also remain extraordinarily high. Seemingly every presidential failure provokes a wave of post mortem analyses to determine where the White House went wrong and how legislative victory slipped through its fingers.

Building on more than 30 years of groundbreaking research, George Edwards argues that such inquiries are at best misguided and at worst fundamentally misleading. Try as they might, even the most skillful presidents cannot create new political opportunities where few exist. Instead, legislative success is largely a function of a strategic environment that is mostly beyond presidential control. Both with the public and within Congress, even skillful presidents exert influence only at the margins.

The impetus for *Predicting the Presidency* was to explain President Barack Obama's second-term struggles. Edwards clearly and cogently shows how the political environment was stacked against Obama, despite his convincing reelection victory. Confronted first by a Republican-controlled House and then also by a GOP-held Senate, Obama failed to secure meaningful action on most of his legislative priorities. Yet Edwards's arguments about the limits of presidential power are far from time bound. The book is just as engaging when read through the lens of contemporary politics. Is Donald Trump's inexperience and iconoclastic, if not erratic, behavior to blame for his relatively scant record of legislative accomplishment? Or would a President Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio, or Ted Cruz have similarly struggled? If a Democrat wins the White House in 2020, will it trigger a seismic progressive shift in public policy? Or will the political realities of a divided country and Congress lead to continued stalemate? This book will stimulate provocative debates in undergraduate and graduate classrooms alike.

Much of the book builds directly on the foundation of Edwards's prior contributions to the presidency subfield, but with new data and cases. For example, a series of empirically rich case studies again shows presidents' repeated failures to move public opinion. President Obama's soaring rhetoric often fell on deaf ears as he failed to build public support behind the Affordable Care Act and other initiatives. Even the "Great Communicator," Ronald Reagan, routinely failed to build public support for key priorities, including the Strategic Defense Initiative and Nicaraguan Contra Aid.

An important strand of the "going public" literature argues that presidents enjoy some success not by changing opinion but by raising the salience of issues where the public already agrees with their position. Edwards is certainly sympathetic to this view and places great emphasis on presidents' need to exploit existing opinion and serve as facilitators, rather than directors of change. Nevertheless, while the book discusses several cases in

which targeted strategic efforts have succeeded, it concludes that even this more modest form of opinion leadership is often more easily said than done. The conditions under which such efforts succeed and fail are clearly a fruitful ground for additional research.

Predicting the Presidency also breaks new theoretical and empirical ground. Chapter 7 examines presidents' success in shaping opinion among cross-pressured Americans. Recent cases offer some evidence that presidents can bring along members of their own party, even when their actions conflict with many copartisans' prior policy preferences. However, even here the data suggest the limits of opinion leadership. For example, President Obama succeeded in rallying many Democrats behind surveillance policies that most Democrats abhorred under President George W. Bush. However, Obama enjoyed little luck in rallying Democrats behind aid to Syrian rebels or strikes against the Assad regime.

Perhaps even more interesting is the case of cross-pressured opposition party members. Can presidents build support from the opposition by pursuing policies in line with their preferences? Edwards finds only modest evidence that they can. While Obama enjoyed considerable Republican support for military action against ISIS, in both the surveillance and Syrian airstrikes cases Edwards finds evidence of a significant backlash effect. Despite considerable Republican elite support for Obama's policies, he failed to secure substantial support from Republicans in the mass public.

Chapter 8 examines the critical question of whether the rise of social media has bolstered presidents' capacity to lead opinion and mobilize their supporters to influence the legislative process. Past scholarship has documented the decline of the golden age of presidential television, increasing competition between news and entertainment options, and the fragmentation and atomization of the media environment, all of which have conspired against presidents' ability to reach and appeal to a mass audience. Social media and other new forms of communication may offer presidents a way to counter these trends. Has the rise of social media been a game changer? After carefully tracing President Obama's many efforts to exploit various media to influence the public and mobilize his supporters, Edwards argues it has not. While social media paid significant electoral dividends for Obama, it did little to boost his legislative agenda. While future scholarship will undoubtedly paint a fuller picture, at first blush the same would seem to be true for President Trump.

Finally, having shown presidents' struggles to move public opinion, Edwards argues that they have little more success persuading members of Congress. Perhaps most tellingly, the partisan balance of power in Congress is more predictive of roll-call voting outcomes today than ever before. Interestingly, Edwards notes that perhaps President Obama's biggest legislative victory in his second term

dominated by divided government—enacting a tax increase on the wealthiest Americans (those earning more than \$450,000 a year)—was possible only because of the sunset provisions in the original Bush tax cuts. In this case, congressional inaction would have led to the expiration of all of the Bush tax cuts, congressional Republicans' least-preferred outcome. This reality, not presidential persuasion, enabled bipartisan compromise. To this, one might add that President Obama's greatest achievement of his first term—the passage of the Affordable Care Act—was made possible only because of Senate Democrats' filibuster-proof majority (which disappeared in the midst of the legislative battle itself, requiring a creative use of reconciliation). Similarly, President Trump's most important legislative victory to date—the massive corporate tax cut—was also possible solely because of the use of reconciliation to circumvent the need for Democratic votes in the Senate.

Is there anything presidents can do in the absence of such conditions or major opportunities in the political environment? In the conclusion, Edwards argues that presidents may best serve their interests by eschewing public appeals and “staying private” in the hopes of fostering an “accommodating spirit” among swayable members of Congress. To be sure, Edwards acknowledges that such an approach is far from a panacea. Nevertheless, he contends that such an approach “is likely to contribute to reducing gridlock, incivility, and public cynicism” (p. 213). Dialing back the public posturing could conceivably increase the grounds for compromise. However, the conditions under which such strategies can succeed in an increasingly polarized polity are plainly a question for further research.

The Politics of Millennials: Political Beliefs and Policy Preferences of America's Most Diverse Generation. By

Stella M. Rouse and Ashley D. Ross. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018. 336p. \$80.00 cloth.
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— Deborah J. Schildkraut, *Tufts University*

This book offers an important, wide-ranging analysis that compares political attitudes and behaviors of Millennials to older Americans while also providing an essential analysis of the heterogeneity that exists among Millennials. It should be referenced by anyone writing in political science about this generation. After reading it, I am even more convinced than I was before that referring to “Millennials” as a group is often inadequate. Stella Rouse and Ashley Ross routinely show that race and ideology often complicate whether and how being a Millennial affects public opinion.

The authors begin by describing Millennials and the social, economic, and political contexts in which they came of age. They review literature on political