

elections, is to explore the political skill set that allowed such resilience—but that also, in part, bequeathed our current era of divided government. The campaign bookshelf stretches from journalistic inside-the-war-room books like John Heilemann and Mark Halperin's *Game Change* (2010) that descend from Theodore White's "Making of the President" series, to invaluable standards of statistical analysis such as the long-running "change and continuity" volumes anchored by Paul Abramson, John Aldrich, and David Rohde. (Readers traversing this range should make a long pitstop at Richard Ben Cramer's *What It Takes* [1992], in a category and class of its own.) Nelson steers a middle course, frequently and aptly referring to political science research while emphasizing narrative coherence and readability. Despite its title, the book gives close to equal time to the 1988 election as well, given its importance both to introducing the next decade's cast of characters and to the George H. W. Bush presidency and thus his prospects for reelection. That is a lot to cover. Yet Nelson masterfully synthesizes three campaigns and two presidencies—plus numerous would-be presidents—in 225 pages (the rest of the book contains the appendices and references, including a useful bibliographic essay).

Nelson does not rewrite the conventional wisdom about this period so much as write it with eloquence and coherence. This is not meant as faint praise: those (increasingly many) who do not remember these events in person will find a faithful and even graceful guide, whereas those who do remember can rely entirely on his curation. The high points are here, of course, from Bush's decision to break his 1988 promise not to raise taxes in pursuit of bipartisan deficit reduction—an example of good governance, if bad politics—to Clinton's 1996 "bridge to the 21st century" that countermanded his midterm shock two years earlier or at least bested Senate majority leader Bob Dole's "themelessness" (p. 198), and to the culture wars fueling the rise of the Gingrich GOP. Meanwhile, Pat Buchanan took advantage of the post-1968 entrepreneurial nominating system to mount a symbolic but damaging challenge emphasizing Bush's tax-hiking perfidy, while H. Ross Perot, "jug-eared, and twangy, clothed in what appeared to be a fifty-dollar suit and trimmed up with a fifty-cent haircut" (p. 94), won the largest share of the popular vote outside the two-party system since Teddy Roosevelt in 1912. From Bush's dire warnings that a Vice President Gore would bring Americans "up to our neck in owls" (p. 151) to Clinton's assessment of Dole as the only Republican candidate to "have any tall" (p. 188), Nelson shows his keen eye for both the big picture and the telling detail, for melding personalities with policy proposals. That Bill Clinton claimed Kenny G as his favorite musician in 1992 (see p. 129) would be libelous if not accurate, but it actually sums up quite a lot about his political style.

In some ways that "New Democrat" triangulation adeptly evaded polarization—certainly within the general

public and sometimes, especially in 1996 and 1997, even on Capitol Hill. Yet as Nelson makes clear, key shifts in American politics we now deplore (it is worth recalling academics' long support for "responsible party government") gestated in the evolving partisan, campaign finance, and media environments starting to bear sour fruit even by the early 1990s. Indeed, this book levels a new charge at Donald Trump: plagiarism. OK, not literally, as that would involve him writing something. But consider Nelson's depictions of Pat Buchanan's 1992 and 1996 campaigns, declaring a "cultural war" for the "soul of America" (p. 115), pushing protectionism (with NAFTA as "sellout of the American worker" [p. 186]) and isolationism, complete with "a 200 mile long 'Buchanan Fence' along the Mexican border to keep out immigrants" (p. 102). Indeed, as polls closed in the New Hampshire primary in 1992, Buchanan said, "We are going to make America great again, because there is nothing wrong with putting America first" (p. 104).

All that proved a losing and even frightening message even in 1996; 20 years later, of course, it won the day, if only 46% of the popular vote. How much of the difference is tied up in Bill Clinton's ability to navigate (and shape) the political landscape and how much in primary electorates' later rejection of his "neoliberal" brand of centrism is hard to answer. Clinton felt it was more important to win than to be "pure," policy-wise; activists in both parties are frequently not so sure. Indeed, Nelson's titular "new era of governance" is one of "de facto divided government" where the parties behave as if government is divided even when it is not. This "divided government in fact even when united in form" is riven by a refusal to cross party lines or to work cooperatively to improve policy, for fear it may help the other party stay in power at a time of partisan volatility (p. 216). As Morris Fiorina argues in *Unstable Majorities* (2017), one result is overreach, which in turn leads straight back to electoral turnover. Joe Biden's nomination in 2020 aimed to show that the middle ground can still be fertile and can still formulate popular policy change. If so, Nelson's exhumation of the 1990s may provide at least some lessons in how to do just that.

Making Young Voters: Converting Civic Attitudes into Civic Action. By John B. Holbein and D. Sunshine Hillygus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 266p. \$99.99 cloth, \$34.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592720002649

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It is a well-established axiom in politics that young people consistently vote at lower rates than older adults. This gap has consumed much of the work in political behavior, with no obvious solution for the disparity. The majority of research has focused on examining the causes of this voting

gap and searching for improvements with such resources as political knowledge and verbal skills—which are considered necessary cognitive abilities for increasing voter turnout.

However, John Holbein and D. Sunshine Hillygus argue that those wishing to understand why youth turnout is consistently low and what can be done about it should not be looking at cognitive abilities, which they show have minimal effect on increasing youth voter participation and have done little to reduce the voting age gap. Rather, noncognitive skills—those capabilities or competencies related to self-regulation, effortfulness, and interpersonal interactions—are better determinants of voter turnout than cognitive abilities. Individuals, and especially young people, who have well developed noncognitive skills are more likely to vote.

This book makes an important contribution to the literature on voting behavior and political participation. It introduces a concept that, although more commonly examined in other fields, is relatively nascent in political science. The novelty of how noncognitive skills may influence voter behavior, especially as an alternative to the well-established work on cognitive factors, sets a high bar for convincing readers that this concept is a better measure for understanding voter turnout. Although the authors concede that the book is a “first pass” at this effort, it is a timely and well-developed introduction; most importantly, it serves as a call to arms for political scientists to engage in acknowledging the importance of noncognitive skills in civic participation and to expand the conceptualization, measurement, and application of these skills.

Why do young people vote at lower rates than older adults? Why are noncognitive skills so important to understanding this turnout gap, and how can these skills be better developed and applied to help mitigate the long-term trend? The introductory chapter offers some general answers to these questions and provides a nice hook for the systematic analysis that follows. Holbein and Hillygus note that little is known about *why* youth turnout is low and what can and should be done about it. They make the case that young people are not uninterested in politics or in voting, often expressing strong intentions to cast their vote. However, they argue that voting is similar to other life goals (e.g., healthy eating) that are riddled with personal and institutional obstacles (costs) that need to be overcome in order to follow through on intentions. Overcoming these obstacles is more difficult for individuals participating in the voting process for the first time. Here is where noncognitive skills can make a difference—those with these types of resources are better able to overcome obstacles and be successful in converting intentions into actions.

The authors proceed with emphasizing that most theories of voter turnout are focused on vote intention or how cognitive-based resources determine the ability to vote.

Holbein and Hillygus use these resource-based models as a jumping-off point to push for a more comprehensive take on the costs of voting. One very commendable part of this narrative is the use of qualitative semistructured interviews with young citizens and civic teachers in North Carolina to drive home these costs. These interviews confirm that the higher costs of voting among young people include confusion about mechanical aspects of registering and voting and display the mismatch between what teachers believe to be hurdles (knowledge-based resources) and what students perceive as obstacles.

The middle part of the book offers a deeper dive into defining and measuring noncognitive skills. The authors take a cautious approach to this endeavor; they do not offer a precise delimitation for the conceptual boundaries of noncognitive skills. Instead, they present “noncognitive skills” as an umbrella term designed to capture a group of overlapping constructs. The purpose is to provide enough of an explanation of these constructs for practitioners to apply them to political participation and to show their influence in the act of voting. To do this, the authors rely on nine different existing data sources that include longitudinal surveys, school administrative records, and voter registration files.

Holbein and Hillygus also extend their analysis with the use of several survey experiments to explore the mechanisms that connect noncognitive skills and voting. Ties to the mechanism at work are a bit more preliminary, but the suggestive connection appears to be education. In other words, education, especially early in life, enhances noncognitive skills that make voting and other life tasks easier. Much of the remainder of the book discusses how to improve the current education system—which, as the authors argue, is presently failing to help young people develop the noncognitive skills they need to become voters—and how to lower electoral barriers to voting. On the former, the authors call for a refocus on a civics curriculum that does not simply teach knowledge and facts, but institutes active learning to improve noncognitive skills. On the latter, they point to the effectiveness of reforms such as preregistration and same-day registration in reducing the costs of voting. The conclusion is that increasing voter turnout among young voters requires overcoming *both* personal and institutional obstacles and adopting electoral and educational reforms.

I was convinced early on about the contours of the intention–behavior voting gap and the authors’ proposition for closing this disparity, as well as by the extensive data sources and methods they bring to bear on their analysis. Although not ideal, and heavily reliant on education rather than political participation data, it is a good start in an area of research that requires significantly greater attention and investment.

As with any thought-provoking book, however, this one left me wanting a bit more information on a few fronts.

First, I wish the authors had spent more space addressing how forms of civic engagement other than voting are subject to the noncognitive skills thesis, because the overall goal is to make better democratic citizens. Second, there is a tendency in the book (perhaps unintentionally) to treat young people monolithically. Formative characteristics and experiences vary across racial, ethnic, and even generational groups that likely contribute to the development of noncognitive skills. These factors should be more systematically considered. Finally, an important remaining question is how much electoral reforms can counter the necessity for improved noncognitive skills (or vice versa) in closing the youth voting gap. The book argues for investment in both, but in the real world where trade-offs exist, it is important to have a better understanding of the potential relative success in outcomes. Yet anyone interested in increasing youth civic engagement should heed the call to explore the role of noncognitive skills in the participatory process, with *Making Young Voters* serving as a vital roadmap in the investigation.

World War II and American Racial Politics: Public Opinion, the Presidency, and Civil Rights Advocacy. By

Steven White. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

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Steven White's book, *World War II and American Racial Politics*, considers a question central to how we understand the development of the American state: What impact does international war have on domestic politics? This is decisively a twentieth-century question, because the United States did not take part in any significant international wars until 1918. Yet White chooses not to focus on World War I. He has instead narrowed his focus to explore whether, and to what extent, World War II resulted in what he calls the "racial liberalization" of American attitudes. By this he means "a trend toward lower levels of racial prejudice or greater support of policy interventions to address racial inequities" (p. 38).

The "racial liberalization hypothesis" serves as both the central claim to be examined and the primary motivation for this book. White is engaged in a project to test the validity of an argument that, he worries, has become an article of faith among scholars of American politics. Beginning with *An American Dilemma*, Gunnar Myrdal's (1944) massive analysis of race in the United States, and echoed by more contemporaneous scholars like Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith, Americanists, he claims, simply take as a given that the battle against Nazism led to racial liberalization among the white majority (p. 29). The logic of this claim, White convincingly illustrates, is

very appealing. The aim of his book is to test this argument and perhaps correct it. The results White presents are not encouraging for its advocates.

To explore the racial liberalization hypothesis, White presents a very interesting set of surveys from the 1940s asking questions about anti-Black prejudice (p. 44), support for antilynching and anti-poll tax legislation (pp. 49–56), and military segregation (p. 58). After exploring the attitudes of the citizenry, White examines surveys measuring the attitudes of veterans and compares their results with the answers provided by those who did not serve (pp. 76, 80–82, 85–86). All told, the results indicate that the war's attitudinal effects are neither clear nor consistent. For the public at large, no clear liberalization occurred. White finds that opposition to antilynching legislation actually increased between the beginning and end of the war (p. 65). Among veterans, non-Southern whites were, at war's end, slightly more likely to support antilynching legislation (p. 82), but this trend did not hold below the Mason-Dixon line. Military service did not systematically increase liberalization in any way. White's analysis of these surveys makes a strong case for viewing skeptically any argument suggesting that the members of the "greatest generation" learned something about racial equality through their confrontation with the Nazis.

Having said that, it is worth pointing out that the role World War II plays in this analysis is actually quite limited. For White, "war" really means something like the ideological arguments used by some to explain the battle against the Nazis. The ideological justification for any war is important, and I am convinced by White's argument that social scientists should work to determine how, in what ways, and to what extent we might expect it to structure public attitudes after a particular conflict ends. White performs a real service by raising this question and calling on scholars to make it the subject of empirical inquiry. In this case, the ideological impact of war on domestic attitudes proved minimal. White casts doubt on the view that an ideological construction created to justify a specific, ongoing international conflict can displace and then substitute for a long-standing and rival ideology. Antifascism, in short, did not displace white supremacy.

But should we have expected the US battle against the Nazis to force this kind of deep public introspection? Ira Katznelson's (2013) *Fear Itself* explains that, in the prewar period, Southerners were "especially hawkish and anti-Nazi" (p. 278). The impulse to fight the Nazis, he shows, easily coexisted with virulent racism. Even in *The Unsteady March* (1999), Klinkner and Smith do not argue that the ideological justification for war, *on its own*, will durably "liberalize" public attitudes. Instead, they treat "progress toward greater (never yet full) racial equality" as an outcome produced by the concurrence of three factors: the economic and military mobilization of African Americans, ideology (White's target), and the threat of destabilizing