

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

political protest (pp. 3–4). Their argument is more than “Myrdalian.” Progress may occur even if mass attitudes do not change, and racial liberalization within the mass public may not even be necessary. Progress may, in fact, depend more on the threat of disorder from below than the white public’s reckoning with its own ideological inconsistencies.

To take Klinkner and Smith on their own terms would mean demonstrating that the three factors they identify as necessary for progress were present and still no progress occurred. But White acknowledges some movement toward racial equality during and after the war. The second half of *World War II and American Racial Politics* provides a detailed, qualitative examination of decisions made by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. Through careful archival research, White reconstructs the demands made of these presidents by civil rights activists, as well as the pressures they faced to maintain the status quo. The lesson we should take from White’s analysis in this part of the book usefully parallels the polling data he presents: the effects of the war were mixed. Roosevelt did issue an executive order combating job discrimination; Truman did begin desegregating the military. At the same time, Roosevelt chose not to endorse antilynching legislation, and Truman chose not to call for an end to segregation in private businesses.

What does White’s book have to teach us about the effect of World War II on racial progress in the United States? Perhaps most importantly, he highlights the centrality and durability of anti-Black attitudes among the white population even at moments of national crisis. A global war against fascism, in which thousands of Black soldiers gave their lives fighting in segregated units, proved insufficient to durably “liberalize” racial attitudes. There will be no *deus ex machina* to save us from the hard work required to achieve racial progress. White’s book is an important reminder of this fact as we reckon with the political consequences of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter protests against systemic injustice, events that once again highlight racial disparities, even as they open up a possibility for meaningful political reform.

The Turnout Myth: Voting Rates and Partisan Outcomes in American National Elections. By Daron Shaw and John Petrocik. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. 216p. \$99.00 cloth, \$27.95 paper.

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Pundits and scholars often note that Democratic candidates running for office have an electoral advantage in high-turnout elections compared to their Republican challengers. But is there really a partisan bias to turnout?

In *The Turnout Myth*, Daron Shaw and John Petrocik challenge the conventional wisdom that shifts in turnout are correlated with changes in partisan vote choice. Their work fills an important gap in the literature of voter behavior, specifically on how turnout affects partisan vote choice. The authors argue that the belief in a turnout bias, which is thought by many to benefit Democrats when turnout is higher and harm them when it is lower, is just a *myth*.

Using a combination of individual—and aggregate—level (state, county, and district) election data over a span of 50 years (1948–2016), and looking at the turnout and partisan advantage of both parties in different election types (e.g., presidential, senatorial, congressional, and gubernatorial), *The Turnout Myth* shows that the partisan outcome of an election fluctuates: there is no particular trend in favor of either party. In other words, over time, across states, and with different election types, the analysis shows that high turnout does not only help Democrats to win office, but that Republicans can also benefit. Shaw and Petrocik note, “The presidential elections of 2012 and 2016, both with high turnout, did nothing to help the Democrats; Republican majorities in Congress and the states actually increased. If we look at election outcomes before 1990—especially, the years since 1950—Republican presidential candidates have won in relatively high turnout elections (1952), lost in other high-turnout years (1960), and lost in low-turnout years (1976)” (p. 4). This finding holds even when looking *within* each state and *within* each electoral district. It is important to note, however, that the authors do not suggest that get-out-the-vote efforts do not help shape election outcomes.

In chapters 2 and 3, Shaw and Petrocik lay down the theoretical and empirical foundations of their argument. The narrative starts with a thorough historical description of turnout in the United States. Using presidential election data from 1789 to 2016, they reveal how Progressive Era reforms have affected turnout. *The Turnout Myth* offers a historical description of the difference in turnout between presidential and congressional elections, as well as turnout differences across states and regions—particularly the gap between Southern and Northern states. Revisiting the foundational literature on who votes, what drives people to the polls, and what affects their calculus in voting, Shaw and Petrocik make the case that the absence of turnout partisan bias might be possible. The first pitfall of the conventional wisdom is a consequence of what they refer to as the “cross-sectional interference fallacy”; that is, inferring aggregate-level relationships from individual-level associations (p. 55). Another empirical problem is related to the usage of two-stage, fixed-effects models using county-level election data. In certain cases, the use of fixed-effects models might lead to biased estimates when there are not enough observations at the cross-sectional level.