

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.

In chapter 4, the empirical analysis focuses over time and across states and districts using presidential election data (1948–2016), Senate election data (1966–2016), gubernatorial election data (1966–2016), and House election data from all 435 districts (1972–2010). In chapter 5, their analysis shifts from across to within states and districts in an effort to directly test the turnout bias by looking at the change in vote share as a product of changes in turnout. In chapter 6, their analysis focuses on US House elections from 2000 to 2010. Regardless of how the authors slice the data, the main finding persists: there is no partisan bias related to turnout.

Why is there no support for the conventional wisdom? *The Turnout Myth* offers two empirical explanations. The first is related to the magnitude of the turnout difference between Democrats and Republicans and how it affects the candidates' vote share; the second is tied to "peripheral voters" who are motivated and respond to short-term forces of a specific election. The multitude of short-term forces that drive peripheral voters to the polls include media and social simulations that increase voters' interest in a particular election, issue debates within the elections, and candidates' appeal. Short-term forces "mobilize the participation of those with a weak sense of citizen duty, less interest in public affairs, and little emotional commitment to any political party—the principal driving force in U.S. elections" (p. 112). *The Turnout Myth* argues that short-term forces and the distinction between core versus peripheral voters is crucial to understanding why the conventional wisdom fails.

If there is no turnout bias, then what explains vote choice in high—and low—turnout elections? Building on seminal work from Angus Campbell and Donald Stokes, Shaw and Petrocik explain turnout fluctuations and vote choice as functions of voters' political interest and engagement. They argue that turnout fluctuations are driven by "peripheral" voters who are less partisan and "blow with the political wind, padding the margins of candidates advantaged by current conditions" (p. 13). Turnout rates matter, but higher turnout will help whichever party benefits from what is going on; that is, by the direction of the short-term forces.

The Turnout Myth draws on other factors that help explain vote choice, which are related to short-term forces such as incumbent approval, economic performance, and campaign spending. The authors show that these factors are more correlated with vote choice than turnout. Institutional factors, such as the type of the ballot form, are also found to explain turnout oscillations. The authors discuss the effect of presidential elections on House elections. If someone votes for the Republican presidential candidate, that person is more likely to vote for other Republican candidates running for lower offices down the ballot: an example of classic coattail voting. Coattail voting causes a surge in votes for the party of the leading presidential

candidate. However, it is a short-term force because most of the time, after the election, the vote share for that party declines in the following midterm elections.

Normatively, high turnout is considered to be a desirable outcome in a democracy. However, as Shaw and Petrocik show, there is no systematic link between election outcomes and turnout levels. They conclude that the conventional wisdom—that Democrats win when turnout is high—is not true. *The Turnout Myth* provides readers with thorough insight on what makes the American voter tick and so may inform campaigns' persuasion and mobilization strategies.

Let the People Rule: How Direct Democracy Can Meet the Populist Challenge. By John G. Matsusaka. Princeton:

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Over the last 20 years, the study of direct democracy (i.e., referendums) has grown dramatically. On balance, the evidence clearly suggests that mechanisms of direct democracy, when well designed for the right kinds of political systems, can be a desirable and effective way of doing democracy (better). John G. Matsusaka does not buck this trend. His book assembles a vast swathe of evidence from political science and political history, occasionally adding his own new data in useful places, to produce an elegant and richly informed set of arguments for the adoption of direct democracy at the national level in the United States. The book is written in an accessible style for a wide audience. Those unfamiliar with debates on direct democracy will enjoy an eye-opening account, while the initiated will find novel insights and much to admire.

The hook that quickly sucks in the reader is Matsusaka's promise to take the populist claim seriously: that the people have been disempowered by a largely unaccountable elite of legislators, bureaucrats, and judges. According to Matsusaka, the standard explanations for the rise of populism—that it is the result of economic shocks or a rise in nativist sentiment produced by the politicization of migration—miss the fact that populists are giving voice to a long-standing and deeply felt democratic malaise (as suggested by 60 years of longitudinal evidence from the American National Election Studies opinion survey; pp. 2–4).

The first part of the book provides wide-ranging evidence in support of the democratic critique behind the populist challenge, documenting the (largely necessary) rise of the administrative or regulatory state (chapter 1); the (largely unnecessary) empowerment of the Supreme Court as a de facto lawmaker (chapter 2), and the