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was of decidedly inferior quality, many critics of the decision accepted the basic principle of the decision but questioned whether Cleveland's scheme was in fact neutral. Greenawalt's critique is much more fundamental (pp. 414–424). Even perfect neutrality is consistent with heavy use of vouchers at pervasively religious schools. And this suggests that neutrality is consistent with a deep involvement of the government in funding religious education, one that, in the author's view, suggests a problematic entanglement of state with religion and an inappropriate influence of state over the development of religious belief. Insofar as his approach is not simply an egalitarian one, or privileges religion in some areas and disdains it in others, one of its key assumptions is that religion occupies a special place in human experience. Although critics of the traditional approach to the religious clauses regard this as the shaky premise in the doctrine, Greenawalt is not embarrassed to mount a defense. Religious commitment is unlike a "mere preference," he argues, in that it involves a sense of obligation, or at least a sense that one's identity is at stake (pp. 310, 217). These stakes make it especially appropriate that individuals be left free by the state to develop and refine their own religious convictions.

It is true that obligation and identity are at stake in certain other kinds of commitments, too, and Greenawalt is not fundamentally opposed to special treatment in other areas. He would give an exemption from combat service to secular pacifists, for instance. But in many areas, schemes of special treatment that extended beyond religion would be impossible to administer, and for this narrow reason, he thinks that religion often will turn out to be special (p. 476).

Although the book has a fairly narrow subject matter, Greenawalt's approach illuminates a range of issues in political theory. It will be especially useful for theorists interested in questions relating to identity, culture, and religion. Against the impulse in much contemporary liberal theory to say that religion and culture should be treated on a par with any other kind of preference or commitment, Greenawalt offers a major restatement of the case for treating certain special kinds of commitments differently.


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— Robin Dale Jacobson, University of Puget Sound

Latinos were announced to be the largest minority group in the United States in 2003. The Asian American population is growing fast and is expected to constitute 8% of the population in America by 2050. It would be reasonable to expect countless attempts by political scientists to figure out how these radical demographic shifts impact political behavior, campaign strategies, and politics more broadly. Unfortunately, and maybe not too surprising for those who work in this field, a quick look at political science journals and academic presses in the past decade reveals that this is certainly not the case. New Race Politics in America, edited by Jane Junn and Kerry Haynie, comes at a much needed time, pulling together scholars who have been working on these issues and presenting state-of-the-field research on minority participation.

The book, which focuses on the political-participation opinion formation of Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans, is a must-read for anyone interested in race and American politics or political participation more broadly. Despite the fact that the book is somewhat hampered by methodological homogeneity, it presents cutting-edge challenges to political scientists, indicating that models of political behavior based on a black-and-white racial model need to be seriously rethought.

The various studies volume collectively indicate that the uniqueness of Latino and Asian American voting behavior is predicated on factors that are tied to the immigrant origin of the populations. The degree to which these groups will maintain this distinctiveness over time is thus up for grabs.

Janelle S. Wong, Pei-te Lien, and M. Margaret Conway argue that explaining Asian American participation requires, in addition to the "usual suspects" (e.g., education, political interest, and direct mobilization), some group-specific factors including migration-related issues, such as nativity and country of education, ethnic origin, experiences with personal discrimination, and a sense of linked fate. As these populations collectively age, as the length of time in the United States for many of them grows, and as the number of native-born voters increases, a sense of linked fate may change, and the uniqueness of Asian Americans as political actors may decrease.

In another chapter, Victoria M. DeFrancesco Soto and Jennifer L. Merolla examine the effectiveness of television advertisements that target the Latino community, finding that only Spanish-speaking Latinos respond to targeted advertisements, but only in English. Similar to the findings on Asian Americans, these authors observe that the distinctiveness of a Latino voting bloc may be transitory, depending on how these communities develop or acculturate, and how society responds to these groups.

In one of the strongest chapters, Dennis Chong and Dukhong Kim find that economic success and ideological factors can move Latinos and Asian Americans away from a group-oriented politics, while African American group consciousness is more resistant to such political assimilationism. They suggest that such resistance might be due to differences in perceptions of group opportunities and experiences with discrimination.

These findings have serious political implications. As the editors make clear at the outset, for traditionally underrepresented groups who face economic and social hurdles,
political mobilization as a bloc can be an effective route for addressing social justice issues. Hanging the fruit of a growing electoral bloc in front of politicians' faces may be enough to secure some concessions. The discussion of the Latino vote as a "sleeping giant," for example, is a politically useful metaphor for those who are working on behalf of Latino interests. Political parties and politicians, as Kristi Anderson shows in chapter 2, need to believe that there are electoral benefits to mobilizing a set of new voters. The essays in this book, by raising these issues, have the potential to influence the political responses to these communities, which in turn can affect the cohesion or lack thereof of these minority groups.

At the same time, New Race Politics in America would have benefited from a more serious reconsideration of prevailing methods in political science, for these methods may not offer the best ways of getting at questions about identity formation, dynamic coalitional possibilities, or intersectional politics. The most direct and innovative challenge to the conventional reliance on behavioralist methods comes from Fredrick C. Harris, Brian D. McKenzie, and Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, who critique the methodological individualism that has dominated political behavior studies, suggesting that this is especially problematic for understanding African American participation. Yet while a few of the other chapters try to extend beyond the survey method that dominates this book, they still demonstrate a troubling attachment to traditional methods of studying political behavior. The analysis by Rodolfo O. de la Garza, Marisa A. Abrajano, and Jeronimo Cortina of Latino state politics in the 2000 election, and Paula D. McClain and her colleagues' case study of African American opinion relating to Latinos and immigration in Durham, North Carolina, could have benefited from the use of discourse analysis or other forms of qualitative analysis.

The failure of others to take seriously the methodological challenge presented by Harris, McKenzie, and Sinclair-Chapman, is but one example of the way in which the book would have been improved by further interaction among the essays and further editorial synthesis. One of the most disappointing features of the volume is the extent to which some of the chapters speak at cross-purposes to one another, or even contradict one another, and yet nowhere are these differences processed or even commented upon. A clearer editorial voice would have helped.

Yet despite some missed opportunities for deeper conversations among the authors, the pieces do allow the attentive reader to begin to ask some of the most pressing questions about race and political behavior today. The chapters indeed complement one another very well, even when there is tension between some of them. And by presenting compelling accounts of a range of important issues—including the effects of group consciousness, intergroup relations, conflicts, and coalitions, and the range of minority political mobilization strategies—the editors have compiled excellent state-of-the-art work in the field in minority participation.


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— David O. Sears, University of California, Los Angeles

These two urban histories on Newark and Los Angeles are part of a second wave of scholarship describing the impact of race and ethnicity in northern cities during the twentieth century. Earlier books by Thomas Sugrue on Detroit, Nicholas Lemann on Chicago, and Douglas Rae on New Haven described the "urban crisis" that followed the sharp reduction in European immigration in the early 1920s. The heavy black migration from the Jim Crow South, meeting the labor needs of industrial metropolitan areas in the North, confronted whites’ historic racism and rejection of African Americans. These volumes take the story up to the post-riot period of the late 1960s. Both try, in different ways, to move beyond the standard black-and-white narrative of black demands confronting white racism to a more complex and multicultural understanding of intergroup relations. Scott Kurashige’s book additionally compares two very different stigmatized minorities—Japanese Americans and African Americans. Both books are based on impressive historical scholarship, and I can recommend them as fascinating reads.

The two metropolitan areas might seem at first glance quite dissimilar. Newark, like many East Coast industrial cities, was already fully developed well before much black immigration, and was dominated by working-class Catholic, European immigrants, living in a dense urban environment. Today, Newark is majority black. In contrast, the great periods of development of Los Angeles came much later, beginning in the 1920s, and then more powerfully during and after World War II, when whites and blacks arrived in droves. During the period of this study, Los Angeles was dominated by middle-class, native-born, Protestant, home-owning whites. Those days are over, too. While the city of Los Angeles is just 11 percent black, whites are now a minority. One would think that these sharp differences would make the African American story quite different in the two metropolitan areas. That would be wrong. The narrative histories are remarkably similar, gut-wrenchingly so. Let me begin with the dominant story as I see it, which is not a happy one, and then close with some comments on both authors’ agendas for the future.