

# For Democracy and a Caste System? World War II, Race, and Democratic Inclusion in the United States

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**Abstract** Scholars of American politics often assume World War II led to liberalized white racial attitudes in its aftermath, in turn prompting a liberal shift in the federal government's position on civil rights. This conjecture is generally premised on the existence of an ideological tension between a war against Nazism and the maintenance of white supremacy at home, particularly the southern system of Jim Crow. A possible relationship between the war and civil rights was also suggested by a range of contemporaneous voices, including academics like Gunnar Myrdal and civil rights activists like Walter White and A. Philip Randolph. However, while intuitively plausible, this relationship is generally not verified empirically. The common flaw shared by much of this research is the lack of empirical evidence for either position, particularly lack of attention to public opinion polls from the 1940s. This paper is a compilation of three condensed chapters from my dissertation. Using both survey and archival evidence, I argue the war's impact on white racial attitudes is more limited than is often claimed, but that the war shaped and constrained the Executive branch's civil rights agenda in ways institutional scholars have generally ignored. The evidence is presented in three parts: *First*, I demonstrate that for whites in the mass public, while there is some evidence of slight liberalization on issues of racial prejudice, this does not extend to policies addressing racial inequities. White opposition to federal antilynching legislation actually increased during the war, especially in the South. *Second*, there is some evidence of racial moderation among white veterans, relative to their counterparts who did not serve. However, the range of issues is limited in scope. *Third*, the war had both a compelling and constraining impact on the Roosevelt administration's actions on civil rights. The war increased the probability of any change at all occurring, but in doing so it focused the civil rights agenda on issues of military segregation and defense industry discrimination, rather than a more general anti-segregation and job discrimination agenda. *In summary*, World War II had myriad impacts on America's racial order. It did not broadly liberalize white attitudes, but its effect on the White House was a precursor to the form of "Cold War civil rights" that would emerge in the 1950s.

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# 1 White Attitudes in the Mass Public

“Some people are prejudiced, but if a man is good enough to fight for his country, he should be allowed to vote.”

—Packing house clerk, Chicago<sup>1</sup>

““No! Absolutely not!!”

—Cabinet maker, Louisiana<sup>2</sup>

These conflicting sentiments – drawn from verbatim responses given to NORC interviewers asking about whether black soldiers should be given ballots while fighting overseas – illustrate the complexity of World War II’s implications for civil rights and America’s racial order. This tension – a war fought for democracy or a war fought to preserve the American status quo? – is reflected by a range of scholarship, some suggesting the war shifted white attitudes in the liberal direction and some suggesting white Americans did not perceive the war’s aims in this manner at all. Both accounts, however, generally neglect the survey evidence which might serve to assess such claims. The relationship between the war and civil rights in public attitudes is also mostly ignored by a small but important strand of recent research examining the growth of civil rights liberalism in the 1940s. This paper marshals the available survey evidence to provide the best possible assessment of whether World War II led to liberalized white racial attitudes in the public as a whole. I examine six issues of racial prejudice, as well as one policy areas: whether the federal government should intervene in state lynching cases. I argue the war did not coincide with widespread liberalization of white racial attitudes, a finding that contradicts casual claims found in recent scholarship on the relationship between war and American politics asserting that it did. White opposition to federal antilynching actually increased during the war, especially in the South where it reached a height of 71 percent by the end of the decade. In contrast to this policy issues, however, there were slight decreases in white racial prejudice. Whites became somewhat more likely to say African Americans should have the same chance at a job, that black blood is biologically the same as white blood, and that black people are as innately intelligent as whites (albeit only outside the South

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<sup>1</sup>National Opinion Research Center, “Should Soldiers Vote! A Special Report Based on a Spot-Check Survey,” Report No. 18, January 1944, 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

in the last case). However, there was no change in assessments of whether African Americans had the same chance to make a good living or whether they were being treated fairly. There was, further, a slight decrease in white acceptance of having a black nurse.

## 1.1 The War and Civil Rights: Competing Claims

The conventional view of the relationship between the war and civil rights is a positive one. I first review contemporaneous voices, which aid in reading history forward rather than backward.<sup>3</sup> I then consider more recent scholarship suggesting a similar relationship. Finally, I consider more critical work contradicting the conventional view. I focus on unresolved tensions between the two sides and what I argue is an insufficient empirical grounding behind the disparate assessments.

### Intellectuals and the war

Many elites at this time saw a connection between the war effort and domestic racial issues. The most famous example is Gunnar Myrdal and his mammoth study *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*.<sup>4</sup> Over the course of nearly 1,500 pages, Myrdal made the contradiction between the aims of war and Jim Crow clear:

This War is an ideological war fought in defense of democracy. The totalitarian dictatorships in the enemy countries had even made the ideological issue much sharper in this War than it was in the First World War. Moreover, in this War the principle of democracy had to be applied more explicitly to race. Fascism and nazism are based on a racial superiority dogma – not unlike the old hackneyed American caste theory – and they came to power by means of racial persecution and oppression. In fighting fascism and nazism, America had to stand before the whole world in favor of racial tolerance and the inalienable human freedoms.<sup>5</sup>

The book is filled with such claims. “There looms a ‘Negro aspect’ over all post-war problems,” Myrdal proclaimed.<sup>6</sup> Some 571 pages later, he was more confident in his phrasing: “There is

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<sup>3</sup>Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Ziblatt, “The Historical Turn in Democratization Studies: A New Research Agenda for Europe and Beyond,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 8/9, 2010, 931-968.

<sup>4</sup>Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, Vol. 1-2, New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944

<sup>5</sup>Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, Vol. 2, 1004.

<sup>6</sup>Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, Vol. 1, 426.

bound to be a redefinition of the Negro's status in America as a result of this War."<sup>7</sup> Overall, Myrdal believed the cost of the racial order was becoming too large to sustain. "Caste is becoming an expensive luxury of white men," he wrote.<sup>8</sup> Myrdal's book was, according to Alan Brinkley, a "major factor in drawing white liberal attention to problems of race – precisely because Myrdal himself discussed racial injustice as a rebuke to the nation's increasingly vocal claim to be the defender of democracy and personal freedom in a world menaced by totalitarianism."<sup>9</sup> Although it received some scattered criticism,<sup>10</sup> the nature of the book – its social scientific language, non-partisan sponsorship, massive length, Myrdal's European-ness – led it to seem like a "definitive analysis" of the American race problem in elite discourse.<sup>11</sup>

Myrdal was not the only academic who noticed the connection between the war and domestic racial issues. Writing in 1942, E. Franklin Frazier suggested "the liberal press of the South has been disposed to treat the Negro with greater consideration during the war," offering as an example the Raleigh, North Carolina, *News and Observer's* decision to start using "Mrs." in reference to upper-class black women. He acknowledged, however, that even these more liberal papers maintained a defense of the southern system of segregation.<sup>12</sup> Some liberal journalists at the national level went further in analyzing the tension between the logic of war and white supremacy in the South. In the aftermath of the 1943 Detroit race riot, an editorial in *The Nation* declared, "We cannot fight fascism abroad while turning a blind eye to fascism at home. We cannot inscribe our banner 'For democracy and a caste system'."<sup>13</sup> Such statements gave the institutional support of white liberals to similar claims being made by the black civil rights movement.

This was also perceived, in more negative terms, by certain prominent racial conservatives. Dixiecrat intellectual leader Charles Wallace Collins worried the war "offered the opportunity for

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<sup>7</sup>Myrdal, *An American Dilemma*, Vol. 2, 997.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 1017.

<sup>9</sup>Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War*, New York: Vintage Books, 1995, 168-169.

<sup>10</sup>Leo P. Crespi, "Is Gunnar Myrdal on the Right Track?" *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1945, 201-212.

<sup>11</sup>Brinkley, *The End of Reform*, 169-170

<sup>12</sup>E. Franklin Frazier, "Ethnic and Minority Groups in Wartime, with Special Reference to the Negro," *The American Journal of Sociology*," Vol. 48, No. 3, November 1942, 377.

<sup>13</sup>Cited in Maria Hohn, " 'We Will Never Go Back to the Old Way Again': Germany in the African-American Debate on Civil Rights," *Central European History*, Vol. 41, 2008, 616.

the rationalization of the position of the Negro as a citizen of the United States in a time of war.”<sup>14</sup> He did not view this prospect in a positive light. Others did not think the linkage would prove as successful. Southern newspaper columnist John Temple Graves, for example, wrote in 1942, “[T]hey have invited their followers to think in terms of a Double V-for-Victory – victory in battle with Hitler and victory in battle at home. Victory, unhappily, doesn’t work that way.”<sup>15</sup> Later in the same article, while detailing improvements in the conditions of black southerners during the war, he noted the decline of lynchings, but warns, “Unhappily the number may increase now as a result of the agitations of the white man against the black and the black against the white.”<sup>16</sup>

### Contemporary assessments

Klinkner and Smith offer the clearest example of the positive argument in contemporary political science research. “[S]ubstantial progress toward greater (never yet full) racial equality has come only when three factors have concurred,” they argue: (1) “in the wake of a large-scale war requiring extensive economic and military mobilization of African Americans for success”; (2) “when the nature of America’s enemies has promoted American leaders to justify such wars and their attendant sacrifices by emphasizing the nation’s inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic traditions”; and (3) “when the nation has possessed domestic political protest movements willing and able to bring pressure upon national leaders to live up to that justificatory rhetoric by instituting domestic reforms.”<sup>17</sup> This theoretical framework leads them to argue there have been three “eras of significant progress toward greater racial equality in U.S. history”: (1) the First Emancipation following the Revolutionary war; (2) Reconstruction following the Civil War; and (3) the modern civil rights era, which they define as 1941-1968.<sup>18</sup> Writing of the third era, they argue, “The years from 1941 to 1968 framed an extraordinarily prolonged period in which all three of the factors we stress remained present. Throughout these decades, the United States continuously mobilized huge numbers of black soldiers for actual or possible combat against Nazi and Communist foes,

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<sup>14</sup>Cited in Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 22.

<sup>15</sup>John Temple Graves, “The Southern Negro and the War Crisis,” *Virginia Quarterly Review*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1942, 501

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 514.

<sup>17</sup>Klinkner and Smith, *The Unsteady March*, 3-4.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

against which American leaders stressed the nation's democratic ideals. Meanwhile a broad array of civil rights protesters pushed to make those ideals realities for all Americans."<sup>19</sup>

Klinkner and Smith make rather explicit claims about the nature of public opinion, yet they do not actually offer any original analysis of public opinion data – generally a questionable analytical tactic. They claim, for example, that it is “hard to escape the conclusion that the “Nazi menace forced at least some white Americans to begin to reexamine the racial inequalities in their midst.”<sup>20</sup> This is a very clear claim, but not verified with reference to survey data. Later, they fill in the causal processes. “[T]he ideological demands of fighting an enemy who espoused racial hierarchies made more white Americans sensitive to the presence of racial discrimination in America,” they argue. “The vision of blacks marching to claim their rights contradicted the image of America as the defender of democracy.”<sup>21</sup> Klinkner and Smith do offer some willingness to concede that white opinion in the South did not liberalize, and perhaps even hardened in its white supremacist resolve.<sup>22</sup> But in general, their claim about a shift in white attitudes is fairly strong.

This claim about public opinion affects not only their assessment of the public, but also normative assessments of other actors like President Roosevelt. “Roosevelt’s unwillingness to take a stronger stand on racial issues was, in hindsight, regrettable and costly,” they argue. “True, white Southerners were becoming more restive, but it seems clear that in the context of the war, nationally public attitudes on race had shifted enough that he could have been more outspoken for reform.”<sup>23</sup> However, this claim is not cited, nor do they refer to any public opinion data.

This sort of thinking also sneaks in as “common sense” in some constitutional law textbooks. For example, in an overview of the *Brown v. Board* case in *Quarrels That Have Shaped the Constitution*, the point is made rather explicitly in providing historical background. Writing of World War II, Alfred H. Kelly asserts, “[T]he egalitarian ideology of American war propaganda, which presented the United States as a champion of democracy engaged in a death struggle with the German racists, created in the minds and hearts of most white people a new and intense aware-

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Philip A. Klinkner and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 137.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 160.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.168

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 199.

ness of the shocking contrast between the country's too comfortable image of itself and the cold realities of American racial segregation."<sup>24</sup>

Some historians and political scientists today, however, suggest this was not the case, especially for the public at large. Daniel Kryder, for instance, argues Americans were "less familiar with the aims of the war and their relationship to democratic ideals than Myrdal believed."<sup>25</sup> More generally, Kryder's claim that wars tend to coincide with racial crowd violence seems contradictory to Klinkner and Smith's claim that war is an important condition for progress towards racial equality. In his analysis of racial violence on the home front during World War II, Kryder sees this as part of a larger trend indicative of war's "curious bipolar character in studies of the political prospects of American social groups."<sup>26</sup> As he writes of the specific "contradictions" produced by wars on American race relations, "In what appears to be a pattern, racial crowd violence in this century has coincided with wars and their immediate aftermath."<sup>27</sup> Jason Sokol's analysis of white southerners' reactions to the civil rights movement goes even further. Many white veterans simply wanted to return home and resume life exactly as they had left it. "That often meant supporting Jim Crow as staunchly as ever," he writes. "Many believed they had fought to defend, not overturn, racial customs."<sup>28</sup> This project seeks to mediate these conflicting perspectives.

I also view this project as an extension of Schickler's developing research agenda on the relationship between economic liberalism and racial liberalism. While I find his work largely compelling, I find the almost complete absence of World War II in his story to be a critical limiting factor. I briefly review his public opinion work here with this focal point in mind. In a paper exploring the connection between New Deal liberalism and racial liberalism, Schickler does not give the wartime context any meaningful causal role. Regarding the war, he only notes in passing how civil rights activists "capitalized on external events," including "the rise of Nazism in Eu-

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<sup>24</sup>Alfred H. Kelly, "The School Desegregation Case," *Quarrels That Have Shaped the Constitution*, Ed. John A. Garraty, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987 [1962]), PAGE.

<sup>25</sup>Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State During World War II*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10.

<sup>26</sup>Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, ix.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, x.

<sup>28</sup>Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything: White Southerners in the Age of Civil Rights*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 20, 23

rope” and “the disruptions of World War II.”<sup>29</sup> Nothing further is said about how such “external events” were capitalized on. The same is true in Caughey and Schickler’s analysis of public opinion towards New Deal policies.<sup>30</sup> This all fits well with the claim made by Feinstein and Schickler in an earlier paper. They focus on two domestic mechanisms through which the Democratic Party gradually adopted more racially liberal policies than Republicans: (1) critical constituents in the Democratic coalition, like Jews and CIO members, were more predisposed toward civil rights liberalism than the business-oriented constituents of the Republican Party; and (2) the “ideological logic of the New Deal itself,” by which they mean the movement of the party towards a rights-based focus in conjunction with a willingness to use the federal government to intervene in society.<sup>31</sup> I find the evidence for these claims to be largely persuasive. Entirely neglected in their treatment, however, is the the context of World War II.

## 1.2 The Racial Liberalization Hypothesis

In this section, I test the following hypothesis: World War II led to broad shifts in white attitudes toward race and civil rights. I will refer to this as the racial liberalization hypothesis. The racial liberalization hypothesis is supported when white attitudes become more racially liberal during the course of the war. If there is no change – or if attitudes become more racially conservative – then the racial liberalization hypothesis is rejected.

## 1.3 Data and Methodology

I use public opinion surveys from 1937-1950.<sup>32</sup> Details about the specific surveys are provided in the relevant sections where they are used. Methodologically, I make an effort to correct for the observable biases of the data as much as possible. For cross-tabs, I use the weighting methodol-

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<sup>29</sup>Schickler, “New Deal Liberalism and Racial Liberalism in the Mass Public, 1937-1968,” Paper presented at 20th Century American Politics & Society workshop, April 12, 2012, 3.

<sup>30</sup>Devin Caughey and Eric Schickler, “Public Opinion, Organized Labor, and the Limits of New Deal Liberalism, 1936-1945, *Studies in American Political Development*, Vol. 25, October 2011.

<sup>31</sup>Brian Feinstein and Eric Schickler, “Platforms and Partners: The Civil Rights Realignment Reconsidered,” *Studies in American Political Development*, Vol. 22, 2008, 5-6.

<sup>32</sup>iPoll Databank, [http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data\\_access/ipoll/ipoll.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/data_access/ipoll/ipoll.html).



ogy developed by Berinsky and Schickler.<sup>33</sup> When possible, I use an “eduWhites” weight, which they consider best if one is seeking to “investigate white opinion, either nationally or with respect to regional differences.”<sup>34</sup> In such cases, I weight the sample – which is restricted to whites – by gender, region, and educational attainment. This involves dividing the sample into 32 possible gender-region-education combinations and weighting each group according to their Census figures. Methodological details are provided in the Appendix. Census data is drawn from the IPUMS-USA Project by the Minnesota Population Center at the University of Minnesota.<sup>35</sup> Methodologically, I’ll be comparing questions that were repeated at multiple time-points with respect to the temporal hypothesis just described.

## 1.4 Results

### 1943-1946: Change Over Time with Respect to “Attitudes Toward Negroes”

In 1944, NORC administered “Survey #1944-0225: Attitudes Toward Negroes,” a national survey of white attitudes. The sample is 2,521 national white adults who were interviewed face to face. While other surveys asked a question here and there about race relations in the midst of other inquiries, this survey is entirely about race. The results provide a unique look at white attitudes in the middle of World War II. This particular survey made a number of people uncomfortable. In December 1944, a confidential report summarizing the results was sent to seventy-five people asking for comments on how it might be used in a constructive manner and whether it would be advisable to release the numbers into general distribution. Later the results were in the process of being prepared for publication by the American Council on Race Relations, but the council was concerned about a preliminary release. “The danger of publishing such figures, without due caution and interpretation,” they argued, “lies in the fact that many persons reading the results of

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<sup>33</sup>Adam J. Berinsky, “American Public Opinion in the 1930s and 1940s: The Analysis of Quota-Controlled Sample Survey Data,” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 4, Winter 2006, 499-529. See also documentation by both Berinsky and Schickler that accompanies corrected datasets on iPoll.

<sup>34</sup>See iPoll documentation

<sup>35</sup>Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center [producer and distributor], 2010.

the poll would mistake figures published for actual facts.”<sup>36</sup>

Six of the questions from the “Attitudes Toward Negroes” survey were repeated on a single occasion. While this is not an ideal number of data points from a contemporary perspective, it is effectively a goldmine by the standards of 1940s survey research. This section compares the aggregate and regional numbers between  $t_1$  and  $t_2$  to offer some assessment of potential change over time. Assessing any potential shift from 1943 to 1944 might be of some inherent interest, but unfortunately it does not allow for a during and postwar comparison. However, the 1944 and 1946 comparison does offer this and fortunately most of the questions were repeated at this point.

The good living question (“Do you think Negroes have the same chance as white people to make a good living in this country?”) was asked in a November 1943 survey titled “Postwar Problems, Old Age Pension, Public Schools and Free Speech.” This survey interviewed 2,560 national adults face to face. Later, five of the questions were repeated in a May 1946 survey titled “Minorities; United Nations.” This survey interviewed 2,589 national adults face to face. There was a question about fair treatment (“Do you think most Negroes in the United States are being treated fairly or unfairly?”), jobs (“Do you think Negroes should have as good a chance as white people to get any kind of job, or do you think white people should have the first chance at any kind of job?”), blood (As far as you know, is Negro blood the same as white blood, or is it different in some way?”), intelligence (“In general, do you think Negroes are as intelligent as white people – that is, can they learn just as well if they are given the same education?”), and having a black nurse (“If you were sick in a hospital, would it be all right with you if you had a Negro nurse, or wouldn’t you like it?”).<sup>37</sup>

Whites became slightly more likely to say African Americans should have the same chance at a job, rising from 38 percent to 45 percent. Northern support for equal opportunity increased from 46 percent to 52 percent; southern support increased from 15 percent to 25 percent. Whites became slightly more likely to say black blood was the same, with the number increasing from

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<sup>36</sup>Jean Converse, *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence 1890-1960*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 312-313.

<sup>37</sup>I calculate a 32-category eduWhites weight for the 1943 dataset. However, I am only able to calculate a 24-category eduWhites weight for the 1946 dataset, since I am unable to distinguish between whites who attended high school and whites who actually graduated (these two groups are thus lumped together).

31 percent to 40 percent. The number saying it was different was effectively constant, moving from 35 percent to 33 percent. However, don't know responses dropped from 34 percent to 28 percent. In the North, whites moved from 34 percent to 42 percent saying it was the same. In the South, whites moved from only 20 percent saying it was the same to 32 percent saying so. Whites became more likely – moving from 45 to 54 percent – to say blacks were as intelligent as whites. However, this shift is almost entirely non-southern. In the South, 30 percent of whites said yes in 1944 compared to 31 percent in 1946. In the North, however, this number increased from 50 percent in 1944 to 61 percent in 1946.

The percentage of whites who said they thought African Americans had the same chance as whites to make a good living was roughly constant from 1943 to 1944, increasing from 52 percent to 54 percent. If all extraneous responses – including don't knows – are dropped, it does increase from 53 to 60 percent, but this likely overstates the shift. White assessments of whether African Americans were being treated fairly remained constant from 1944 to 1946, at 63 percent in both years. The question about having a black nurse saw a decrease in support, from 50 percent of whites saying they would be okay with this in 1944 to 46 percent in 1946. This seems primarily driven by Northern whites, where support dropped from 56 percent to 51 percent, while moving only from 32 percent to 30 percent in the South.

Overall, changes over time are mixed. There is some evidence of slight racial liberalization, but this is counterbalanced a bit by a few null results and especially by the nurse question which saw a conservative shift. Regionally, it seems shifts were often roughly similar across region, although this was not true for the question about black intelligence. There are, however, clear limitations to this analysis. Two data points are less than ideal, especially since there is no clear before and after (1946 is postwar, but both 1943 and 1944 are during the war). Having a 1938 comparison case would be preferable.

### **1937-1950: Lynching Attitudes Before and after the War**

I finally turn to an assessment of changing white attitudes on federal intervention in state lynching cases. Lynching was raised as a national political issue by black civil rights organizations like the

NAACP. Black legal figures like William Hastie and Thurgood Marshall kept pressing the issue during World War II, arguing that “[t]he recent outbreaks of mob violence again emphasize the fact that only Federal action will free us from lynchings and the threat of lynching.”<sup>38</sup> Federal antilynching legislation was often proposed, but never successfully passed in the Senate. Such legislation was a challenge to Roosevelt’s congressional New Deal alliance. Roosevelt and his congressional supporters “tailored New Deal legislation to southern preferences,” according to Katznelson et al., trading maintenance of southern society’s status quo for southern support for New Deal economic legislation. This meant that not even “the most heinous aspects of regional repression, such as lynching, [could be] brought under the rule of law.”<sup>39</sup> Yet for many politicians outside the South, black migration meant “black political power was becoming an unavoidable reality.”<sup>40</sup> Antilynching legislation soon became more than the sum of its parts, effectively serving as a symbol for racial conservatives of the meddling of northern liberals in the white South’s affairs.

To assess the more general state of white public opinion on lynching, I use Gallup questions about federal intervention in state lynching cases, which were asked before and after – although, interestingly, not during – the war. While Schickler discards the don’t know responses to create dichotomous response categories in his analysis of the prewar lynching questions, I leave the don’t know responses in to allow for a valid third category of uncertainty. As will be discussed momentarily, this helps to assess prewar and postwar shifts in the opposition category.

A word of caution is in order regarding question wordings. While the analysis presented here is consistent with evidence regarding the poll tax (which provides a useful robustness check, as there is no substantial variation in question wording there), Gallup’s questions about lynching are indicative of some of the weaknesses of early survey research. The questions can basically be divided into three groups. The first three questions, all from 1937, asked quite simply whether Congress should pass a law making lynching a federal crime. The next three questions, asked from 1937 to 1940, asked whether the Federal Government should have the authority to fine and

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<sup>38</sup>William H. Hastie and Thurgood Marshall, “Negro Discrimination and the Need for Federal Action,” *Law Guild Review*, 1942, 21.

<sup>39</sup>Ira Katznelson, Kim Geiger, and Daniel Kryder, “Limiting Liberalism: The Southern Veto in Congress, 1933-1950,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 108, No. 2, Summer 1993, 297.

<sup>40</sup>George C. Rable, “The South and the Politics of Antilynching Legislation, 1920-1940,” *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 51, May 1958, 209.

imprison local authorities who do not protect against a lynch mob, which is a much more specific and severe description. In the postwar period, from 1947 to 1950, Gallup returns to a more general question, asking, with only very slight variations, something along the lines of, "At present, state governments deal with most crimes committed in their own state. In the case of a lynching do you think the Federal Government should have the right to step in and deal with the crime – or do you think this should be left entirely to the state government?"

I argue the first (1937) and third (1947-1950) groups of questions are roughly equivalent. They both ask, generally, whether the federal government should have authority over lynchings rather than state officials. As such, comparing the 1937 numbers to the 1947-1950 numbers provides a relatively (by the standards of the era) safe assessment of the racial liberalization hypothesis. However, it is quite possible the second (1937-1940) group of questions might reflect question wording effects. I include them in my results with this cautionary note attached. However, if anything the inclusion of the 1937-1940 questions downplays the amount of change. The increase in opposition to antilynching legislation from 1937 to 1947-1950 would look *larger* if the 1937-1940 questions are ignored because of question wording concerns.

I divide opinion in each survey into support, opposition, and don't know. I use the best possible survey weight to correct for the biases of the sampling procedure. For the postwar questions, this means calculating the eduWhites weight. However, the prewar surveys are more limited. Making the best of the available information, I use profWhites weights for the January 1937, November 1937, and January 1940 datasets; I use phoneBlack weights for the August 1937, October/November 1937, and December 1937 datasets. Weights for the prewar questions were previously computed by Schickler.<sup>41</sup> I calculate the postwar weights myself.

At the national level, support for federal involvement ranged from 58-62 percent from January 1937 until November 1937. Then in December 1937, support seems to have dropped to 42 percent. However, it seems reasonable to ascertain that the reason for the shift is less a genuine change in preferences and more differential question wording. For the first three questions in January, August, and October/November 1937, the question simply asked whether Congress should pass

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<sup>41</sup>iPoll Databank.

a law making lynching a federal crime. In November 1937, the question wording changed significantly, but not in a way that coincided with changed responses. The November question asked whether the federal government should punish an officer who did not protect a prisoner from a lynch mob. However, the new question wording in December 1937 coincided with a 20-point drop in support. This new question was significantly longer and described multiple ways in which the federal government might punish local governments, including fining the county in addition to punishing the police officer. Only 42 percent chose the federal intervention position in this situation. A similarly-worded question was later asked in January 1940 and 48 percent chose that position – a slight increase, but probably not a statistically meaningful one.

Postwar, support for the federal intervention position ranges between 38-41 percent from February 1948 until January 1950. However, there is one outlier. In June 1947, 67 percent chose the federal intervention position. The question wording differed slightly. While the later questions ask whether the federal government should be given certain authority or if it should be left entirely to the state government, the June 1947 question asks whether the federal government should be able to step in “if the State Government doesn’t deal with it justly.” This concluding qualifier (“justly”) probably made the question seem less all-encompassing.

If, for the sake of argument, we assume no question wording effects, support for federal intervention seems to remain almost constant from December 1937/January 1940 to February 1948/January 1950. If anything, there is a slight decrease in support for federal intervention – which drops as low as 38 percent overall, 42 percent in the North, and 21 percent in the South. Further, over time there is a slight tendency for the don’t know responses to turn into opposition to federal intervention, suggesting that even if support for federal intervention is constant, opposition was becoming more solidified. Indeed, by January 1950, opposition to federal intervention was up to 52 percent overall, including 45 percent in the North and 71 percent in the South. Figure 1 plots the percentage of whites that opposed federal intervention from 1937 until 1950.<sup>42</sup> Before the war, opposition never rose above 43 percent overall, 40 percent in the North, and 56 percent in the South, while don’t know response were sometimes as high as 17-20 percent.

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<sup>42</sup>The graph excludes the June 1947 question, as I argue it constitutes a different inquiry.

Precise causal inference is impossible to draw from such data. Yet a few general statements seem consistent with the empirical evidence. The war certainly did not lead to increases in support for federal intervention in state lynching cases. Indeed, the war seems to have coincided with heightened southern resistance to federal intervention – as much as a 15 percentage points increase in opposition. This seems to have been primarily the result of white indecision evolving into a hardened states’ rights position, although there appears to have been a slight drop-off in active support for federal intervention as well.

One potential concern is that “lynching” might mean different things to different people. In particular, the NAACP’s advocacy of antilynching legislation might have led questions about lynching to really be a referendum on the NAACP as an organization. At this point in the project, I remain agnostic here. However, even if this is the case, I argue it does not particularly pose a problem. Inasmuch as an assessment of the NAACP’s policy advocacy would still very much constitute an assessment of civil rights policy preferences, the larger point – looking at prewar to postwar shifts in civil rights policy opinions – still stands.

## **1.5 Discussion**

This section demonstrates that, for the most part, white attitudes were not broadly liberalized on race and civil rights as a result of World War II. There is some evidence of a slight decrease in white racial prejudice during the war. However, this is counterbalanced by evidence that, if anything, white opposition to federal antilynching legislation actually grew, particularly in the South. Although the slight shifts in prejudice should be not totally discounted, this section offers a clear rebuke to scholarship that has simply assumed the war had a major impact on white racial attitudes without analyzing the available survey evidence. This perspective – especially in its more declarative forms – is simply not supported by the available survey evidence. Several issues cannot be fully resolved, including sheer data limitations, possible variation in survey response during the decade, and so on. While acknowledging such limitations, I argue the best account of the war’s impact on white racial attitudes must be consistent with the evidence that does exist.

## 2 White Veterans and Race

“I’ve changed my ideas a lot about colored people since I got into this war and so have a lot of other boys from the South.”

—Lt. Van T. Barfoot, a white soldier from Mississippi<sup>43</sup>

“Gosh, I just had to salute a goddamn nigger lieutenant! Boy, that burns me up!”

—Anonymous white soldier from Kansas<sup>44</sup>

Building on the previous section’s analysis of white attitudes overall, this section examines the relationship between the war and civil rights among those most directly affected: veterans. While there is an interesting body of research examining the impact of the war on black veterans, far less is known about how the racial attitudes of white veterans were shaped by their experiences. As the epigraphs above suggest, social scientists and historians have shared anecdotes about white veterans returning profoundly shaped by friendships with black soldiers or the compelling ideological logic of fighting against Nazi racism. Others, however, have shared equally plausible stories of white soldiers fighting to defend their way of life, the racial structure included. None, however, have systematically considered these contradictory claims with reference to public opinion surveys. This section seeks to mediate between the competing possibilities with an examination of the available survey evidence.

I argue there is greater evidence of racial *moderation* – not quite liberalization – for white veterans than the white mass public as a whole. However, the range of issues is limited. There is some evidence white veterans of the Second World War were more likely to support federal intervention in state lynching cases in the late 1940s and basic black voting rights in the early 1960s, but no real evidence for more radical civil rights politics like the sit-in protests of the 1960s. The evidence further indicates any shifts took some time to develop rather than being an immediate result of the war. The strongest evidence relates to lynching in 1948 and basic voting rights in 1961. However, in the more immediate year of 1946, white veterans were not distinguishable on a broad range of issues related to anti-black prejudice, assessments of whether African Americans were being treated fairly, or assessments of the loyalty of Japanese-Americans.

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<sup>43</sup>James C. Cobb, “World War II and the Mind of the Modern South,” *Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South*, ed: Neil R. McMillen, (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 6.

<sup>44</sup>Walter White, *A Rising Wind*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.: 1945), 136



## 2.1 Background and Previous Research

I first examine contemporaneous accounts of how white veterans might have been liberalizing in their racial attitudes, which appeared in texts by activists, journalists, and academics. I second review and critique contemporary academic literature on the relationship between the war and civil rights politics, which has focused more on how the war motivated black veterans and less on the impact for white veterans.

Many written accounts at the time portrayed a rather positive picture:

During the Detroit race riots in 1943 three sailors waded in to a white mob which was beating unmercifully a slender Negro youth. "He isn't doing you guys any harm. Let him alone!" one of the trio shouted as he and his companions rescued the Negro and fought back the mob.

"What's it to you?" one of the rioters snarled.

"Plenty," replied the sailor. "There was a colored guy in our outfit in the Pacific and he saved the lives of two of my buddies. Besides, you guys are stirring up here at home something we are fighting to stop!"<sup>45</sup>

This suggestive anecdote is drawn from NAACP leader Walter White's 1945 book *A Rising Wind*. Although perhaps apocryphal – White had a tendency to capture dialogue in a manner that seems awkwardly folksy to contemporary ears – such tales nevertheless reached a wide audience and were consistent with other accounts at the time suggesting the war had liberalized the previously racist views of white soldiers fighting for democracy.

White shared other interesting stories as well. In England, White visited the black GI Liberty Club – despite his taxi driver's insistence that he must mean the white Rainbow Club. Although designed for black soldiers, there were some white GIs present as well – "the Georgia accent of one of them was thick as the mud of the Chattahoochee," according to White. The white Georgian told him he preferred the Liberty Club to any of the white clubs because he had become friends with some black soldiers who would not be welcome at the all-white alternatives. White inquired about whether these friendships would continue upon his stateside return:

Ruefully, he spread his hands, palms upward, and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't

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<sup>45</sup>White, *A Rising Wind*, 124-125.

know," he said sadly.<sup>46</sup>

Another white soldier recounted his experiences at the Stage Door Canteen in New York City prior to being sent overseas. The first time the soldier went there he found black hosts and servicemen and he left in anger. But because the canteen was the standard gathering place for soldiers unfamiliar with the city, he went back several times and had a change of heart. "If we can play together, why can't we fight together?" he asked White. When White informed him of proposals civil rights groups had made to the War Department to establish an integrated unit white and black soldiers could volunteer to serve in, the white soldier replied, "I'd like to be the first to volunteer. Then I wouldn't feel like a Goddamned hypocrite when people over here ask why, in fighting a war for democracy, the United States sends over one white and one Negro army."<sup>47</sup>

However, not all of White's interviews were so positive. Many white soldiers expressed significant prejudice. Racial rumors abounded, generally started when white Americans told white locals ridiculous tales of black behavior. Perhaps a more interesting anecdote, however, is White's conversation with General Eisenhower. Referring to a discussion with an unnamed New York journalist, Eisenhower "almost belligerently" exclaimed to White, "He told me my first duty was to change the social thinking of the soldiers under my command, especially on racial issues. I told him he was a damned fool – that my first duty is to win wars and that any changes in social thinking would be purely incidental. Don't you think I was right?"<sup>48</sup>

More academic work also analyzed the war's relationship with white racial attitudes. In 1943's *To Stem this Tide: A Survey of Racial Tension Areas in the United States*, Charles Johnson and his associates shared an anecdote from Evansville, Indiana, where a train conductor ordered a group of white and black soldiers from the same town to separate but a white soldier refused the order and threatened to "fight[] the entire train crew."<sup>49</sup> In the war's aftermath, University of North Carolina sociologist Howard Odum, writing in 1948, described "a relatively large number of young college students and returning G.I.'s advocating a more liberal practice with reference to race relations"

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 15.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 36-37

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 63

<sup>49</sup>Charles S. Johnson and Associates, *To Stem this Tide: A Survey of Racial Tension Areas in the United States*, (New York: AMS Press, 1943), 38.

in the white South.<sup>50</sup> The assumed mechanism is shared service. In a April 1944 memorandum to the War Department, Walter White described his tour of the North African and Middle Eastern Theatres of Operation. “As men approach actual combat and the dangers of death, the tendency becomes more manifest to ignore or drop off pettiness such as racial prejudice—When German shells and bombs are raining about them, they do not worry as much about the race or creed of the man next to them.”<sup>51</sup> However, the most serious academic research into race relations amongst soldiers was *The American Soldier*.<sup>52</sup> A mammoth two-volume set – totaling nearly 1,300 pages of text, much of which is data analysis – this book remains a value resource for insights into the attitudes of soldiers during World War II, as well as a foundational text in survey research and modern social psychology. The first volume contains a substantial and insightful chapter about the attitudes of black soldiers.<sup>53</sup> The second volume concludes with a chapter about what happens when “the soldier becomes a veteran.”<sup>54</sup>

In a more recent political behavioral analysis, Parker convincingly argues military service in the Second World War, as well as the Korean War, had a direct impact on the willingness of black veterans in the South to challenge the white supremacist status quo. However, this analysis leaves open the question of why the war might not have also had significant ramifications on white attitudes and political behavior. For example, Parker argues that “we should expect black Southerners who were exposed to different, more egalitarian cultures to have begun an aggressive interrogation of white supremacy.”<sup>55</sup> Yet he leaves unanswered the question of why this should not also be true for whites who experienced these same “more egalitarian cultures.” Partially this discrepancy rests on Parker’s acceptance of traditional models of military service – based on the more conventional rights-obligation trade-off or more recent rational choice accounts – as sufficient for

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<sup>50</sup>Howard W. Odum, “Social Change in the South”, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2, May 1948, 244.

<sup>51</sup>Official File, OF 93, Colored Matters (Negroes), Apr-May 1944, FDR Library

<sup>52</sup>Samuel A. Stouffer, Edward A. Suchman, Leland C. DeVinney, Shirley A. Star, and Robin M. Williams, Jr., *The American Soldier: Adjustment During Army Life*, Volume I, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949); Samuel A. Stouffer, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, Marion Harper Lumsdaine, Robin M. Williams, Jr., M. Brewster Smith, Irving L. Janis, Shirley A. Star, and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath*, Vol. II, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949).

<sup>53</sup>Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier*, Volume 1, 486-599.

<sup>54</sup>Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier*, Volume 2, 596-644.

<sup>55</sup>Christopher S. Parker, *Fighting for Democracy: Black Veterans and the Struggle Against White Supremacy in the Postwar South*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 95.

explaining white male participation, but not black male participation since they did possess the same full rights of citizenship.<sup>56</sup> However, this seems to leave under-theorized the reason why exposure to relatively more egalitarian race relations – such as those white soldiers serving in countries like France certainly saw – did not have similarly transformative impacts on white attitudes.

Sokol's history of white southern reactions to civil rights quotes individual white southern men who, as a result of their service in the Second World War, came to learn "that freedom means more than just freedom for the white man," as one phrased it. However, Sokol suggests such attitude changes were small, constituting "only a small fraction of white southern servicemen." He quotes Staff Sergeant Ben Fielder, returning home to Mississippi after the war. "I was still just a nigger," he said. "Not an American soldier anymore. Just a nigger."<sup>57</sup> Although Sokol's analysis is enlightening in many respects, it stops short of being generalizable by the standards of political scientists.

At the very least, then, there is a compelling anecdotal argument to be made for either position, but a lack of clear evidence to suggest one has more merit than the other. This section adjudicates between these two perspectives.

## **2.2 The Racial Liberalization Hypothesis for Veterans**

This section tests a version of the racial liberalization hypothesis described in the previous section, but focused on differences between veterans and their civilian counterparts rather than temporal change for the white mass public as a whole. Specifically, I test the hypothesis that World War II liberalized the racial attitudes of white veterans, relative to their non-veteran counterparts. I assess this hypothesis at two distinct time periods: first, in the immediate aftermath of the war; and second, in the earliest part of the 1960s civil rights era. The racial liberalization hypothesis for white veterans is supported when veteran status has a liberalizing impact on racial attitudes, controlling for other demographic variables. If the veteran variable is not statistically significant, however, then the hypothesis can be clearly rejected.

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid. 18-19.

<sup>57</sup>Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*, 19, 20, 24.

## 2.3 Data and Methodology

This section examines public opinion surveys from two distinct time periods: the mid- to late-1940s, to assess the more immediate impact of the war; and the early 1960s, to assess the more longterm impact. The first section uses two surveys that were used in the previous section, but in a slightly different way.<sup>58</sup> I then move ahead in time and use the “Negro Political Participation Survey,” a study of black and white southerners – defined as the former Confederate states – conducted in 1961. This study merits further introduction. The Negro Political Participation Survey was conducted by principal investigators Donald Matthews and James Prothro at the University of North Carolina.<sup>59</sup> This survey uses the more modern NES sample design. Thus, while it is limited by the lack of a non-southern comparison group, it does not face the limitations of the quota controlled samples used in the previous surveys. This is the same survey used by Parker, who focused on the black sample. I utilize the white sample to address the questions stated earlier.<sup>60</sup> I discuss the question wordings in the relevant sections.

Methodologically, I opt to run regressions on the male sample only. I argue this makes clear theoretical sense – although some women served in units like the Women’s Army Corp, the battles of World War II were fought almost entirely men – although it does have the methodological shortcoming of lowering the number of observations in the models. I also restrict the sample with reference to age to focus on those who could have plausibly been veterans. To determine what age range to use, I look at the age and veteran status cross-tabs. For the models using the 1946 dataset, I analyze only those individuals age 40 and below. For the 1948 dataset, I use age 45 as the cut off. For the 1961 dataset, I look only at those between 38 and 65 to best assess the World War II generation. This, too, lowers the number of observations, but it also reduces the possibility that veteran status is simply capturing age effects.

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<sup>58</sup>The 1946 Minorities; United Nations dataset and a 1948 survey that asked about antilynching legislation. These surveys both identify respondents who served in the war.

<sup>59</sup>This dataset was obtained from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) at the University of Michigan. ICPSR Website, “<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/>.”

<sup>60</sup>Parker suggests the merit of “[u]sing data contemporaneous with the [civil rights] movement,” but I argue there is likewise merit in complementing this with data contemporaneous with the the presumably causal military service. Parker, *Fighting for Democracy*, 13.

Education – necessarily controlled for because of sampling concerns in the 1940s datasets<sup>61</sup> – takes on additional importance when studying veterans, especially in the later time period. The 1961 cross-tabs are suggestive. In the white sample used here, 26 percent of respondents had some college experience; 25 percent had served in the military. But among the 25 percent with military service, a much larger 39 percent had some college experience, compared to only 21 percent of non-veterans. Indeed, a bivariate logistic regression of having attended college on veteran status is highly statistically significant. This is likely largely due to the effects of the 1944’s Servicemen’s Readjustment Act – the G.I. Bill – which substantially aided white veterans in attending college.

## 2.4 Results

This 1946 survey contains a wide range of questions about race and civil rights. For dependent variables, I use five of the anti-black prejudice questions from the last section (whether African Americans are being treated fairly, whether they should have the same chance at a job, whether black blood is biologically the same as white blood, whether blacks are as innately intelligent as whites, and whether the respondent would tolerate having a black nose), as well as two questions about anti-Japanese prejudice (whether the average Japanese person in the United States is loyal or disloyal to the American government; and for those who did not choose disloyal, whether they think the average Japanese person should be allowed to become a U.S. citizen)

Results of a series of logistic regressions are presented in Table 1. World War II veterans were possibly less likely to say white people should get the first chance at a job, but the marginal effect of 9 percentage points is only significant at the .10 level. This might be reasonable since N=477, but it’s fudging things a bit at best. Otherwise, there is no distinction between veterans and non-veterans on an array of issues. The list includes whether African Americans are being treated fairly, whether black blood is different than white blood, whether African Americans were as intelligent as whites, whether one would be all right with a black nurse, whether Japanese people in the United States are disloyal on average, and whether Japanese persons living in the United States should be given citizenship if not disloyal.

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<sup>61</sup>Berinsky suggests using the weighting variables as explanatory variables in regression models.

Some of the postwar lynching questions were part of surveys that asked about whether respondents served in World War II. Here, I examine a 1948 question asking respondents, “At present, state governments deal with most crimes committed in their own states. In the case of a lynching, do you think the United States (Federal) Government should have the right to step in and deal with the crime – or do you think this should be left entirely to the state government?”

This survey provides the strongest positive evidence supporting the hypothesis that white veterans were liberalized on race. I estimate the relationship between opinion on federal intervention in state lynching cases and World War II veteran status, controlling for age, region, farm residency (which weakly captures rural effects), and car ownership (which weakly captures class effects). I estimate a logistic regression using a dichotomous version of the variable (assessing preferences for leaving lynching cases to states vs. allowing the federal government to intervene), as well as OLS and ordered probit regressions using a three-category version (allowing “don’t know” to serve as a middle category).<sup>62</sup>

Results are presented in Table 2. White veterans are 10 percent less likely to take the states’ rights position, relative to the federal intervention choice, in the logit model. They are about 8 percent less likely to take the states’ rights position, relative to a don’t know comparison group, in the ordered probit model; in the same model, veterans are 9 percent more likely to prefer the federal intervention approach rather than stating no preference.<sup>63</sup>

While the immediate impact of service on racial attitudes is interesting, another prospect is the long-term impact of military service on later racial attitudes, especially in the era when civil rights politics were most primed. This later analysis also allows me to relate this project more directly to Parker’s work on the later attitudinal and behavioral impact of black veterans’ military service. Relying on the white sample of the 1961 Negro Political Participation Survey, I use the following questions as dependent variables: the respondent’s assessment of how many white people in the South favor racial segregation; whether the respondent themselves favors “integration, strict segregation, or something in between”; their agreement with the statement, “[c]olored people ought to be allowed to vote”; assessment of the sit-in movement (“that is, some of the young

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<sup>62</sup>Treating “don’t know” as a middle category is debatable, of course. However, it does not change the results.

<sup>63</sup>The OLS model captures a similar result.

colored people going into stores, and sitting down at lunch counters, and refusing to leave until they are served"); their agreement with the statement, "Demonstrations to protest integration of schools are a good idea, even if a few people have to get hurt"; whether they have ever "ever known a colored person well enough that you would talk to him as a friend"; and whether they agree that "colored people are all alike."

I estimate regression models where opinion is a function of veteran status, as well as age and educational attainment. The sample is restricted to southern whites by default. As previously noted, I also restrict it to those individuals age 38 to 65. For dependent variables with multiple, ordered response categories, I estimate ordered probit models. For the dichotomous question about friendship – as well as an alternate coding of the sit-ins variable – I use logistic regression. To aid in interpretation, I calculate changes in probabilities for theoretically relevant shifts, as well as the average change, for the veteran variable in the ordered probit models. I also calculate the marginal effect of moving from 0 to 1 on the veteran variable (i.e., moving from not being a veteran to being a veteran) for the logistic regression models.

The strongest support for the racial liberalization hypothesis is found in the model assessing attitudes on black voting rights. Southern whites with military backgrounds were 21 percent more likely than those without military backgrounds to take the most liberal position. The overall average change associated with military service was 11 percent. For this issue, at least, there is clear support for the racial liberalization hypothesis. The veteran variable is significant in the bivariate model assessing anti-integration protests, but the coefficient loses statistical significance when other variables are controlled for. This suggests some other factor correlated with veteran status – educational attainment, perhaps – decreases white support for the anti-integration protests. However, this finding does not supper the racial liberalization hypothesis, since the proper test controls for these other factors. White veterans were 19 percent more likely than non-veterans to say they had a black friend. This is the second piece of evidence supporting the racial liberalization hypothesis. Although the "black friend" trope is a cliché one, it lends some support to the idea that white veterans' relative moderation, at least on some issues, was partly fueled by contact.

However, there is no difference whatsoever between veterans and non-veterans on assess-



ments of the black sit-in protests or general attitudes toward segregation. This is a clear rebuke of the racial liberalization hypothesis. Segregation was at the core of the southern racial status quo, and military service seems to have had no moderating effect on how southern white men felt about the issue. Similarly, the sit-in movement was a critical aspect of the 1960s civil rights movement, and military service likewise seems to have had no impact on white assessments of it.

## **2.5 Discussion**

This section provides some evidence that white veterans' military service corresponded with more moderate racial attitudes on some issues, but not others. White veterans overall were less likely to oppose federal intervention in state lynching cases in 1948, and white veterans in the South were more likely to support black voting rights in 1961. However, white veterans overall did not evince less racial prejudice than non-veterans in the war's immediate aftermath, and by 1961 southern white veterans were not distinguishable from white southerners as a whole on the general question of segregation, as well as their specific assessments of white anti-integration protests and the black sit-in movement. This amends the analysis of the previous section inasmuch as the war cannot be said to have had zero impact on white racial attitudes. However, the limited impacts on the racial attitudes of white veterans merits critical examination. Where racial moderation occurred, it occurred on policies addressing the most extreme of white supremacist violence (lynching) and the clearest example of democratic exclusion (black prohibition from exercising the franchise). However, this moderation did not extend to broader claims about racial integration. The white veterans analyzed in the 1960s were just as supportive of Jim Crow segregation as southern whites who did not serve, and they were not any more sympathetic to the sit-in movement (nor were they any less sympathetic to the white anti-integration protesters).

### 3 The Roosevelt Administration and Civil Rights During the Second World War

**Note:** This section, redacted due to space constraints, uses archival evidence to mediate disparate assessment's of the war's impact on the Executive branch.

### 4 Conclusion

World War II had myriad implications for America's racial order. The ultimate result was neither maintenance of the status quo nor a broad liberalization, but rather something more nuanced. Careful examination of the available survey evidence demonstrates the war had less of an impact on white racial attitudes than is often assumed. While there was a slight liberalization of basic racial prejudice, this did not extend to the policy realm. Indeed, the war corresponded with an increase in opposition to federal antilynching legislation, particularly in the white South. The common refrain that white liberal attitudes were liberalized by the war against Nazism does not stand up to the evidence. Archival evidence demonstrates a simultaneously compelling and constraining effect of the war on the Roosevelt Administration's rhetoric and behavior on civil rights. On the one hand, the wartime context clearly compelled the administration to do *something* on civil rights. In the war's absence, it is possible even the limited civil rights advances made under the administration's purview would not have occurred. However, on the other hand, the war similarly constrained the civil rights policy agenda, leading to a focus on military segregation and defense industry job discrimination, rather than a broader focus on all segregation and job discrimination. This account is distinct from previous scholarship assuming greater liberalization (e.g., Klinkner and Smith), as well as accounts that have a more negative perspective (e.g., Kryder). I propose instead that World War II's impact on the Executive branch be seen more as a precursor to the form of "Cold War civil rights" that would emerge in the following decade.

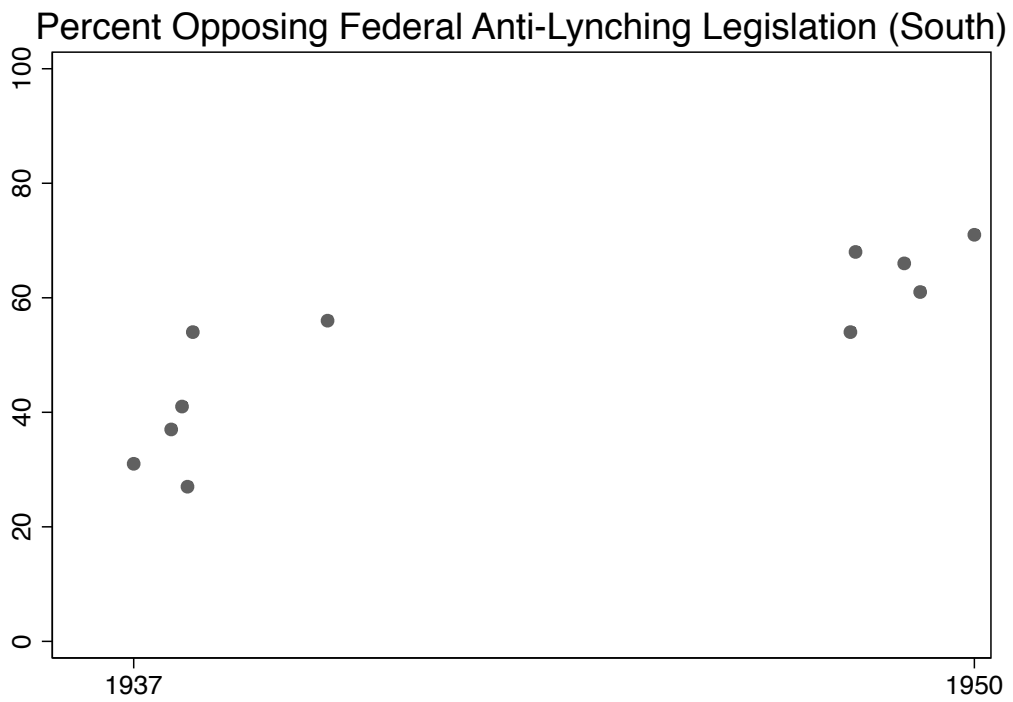
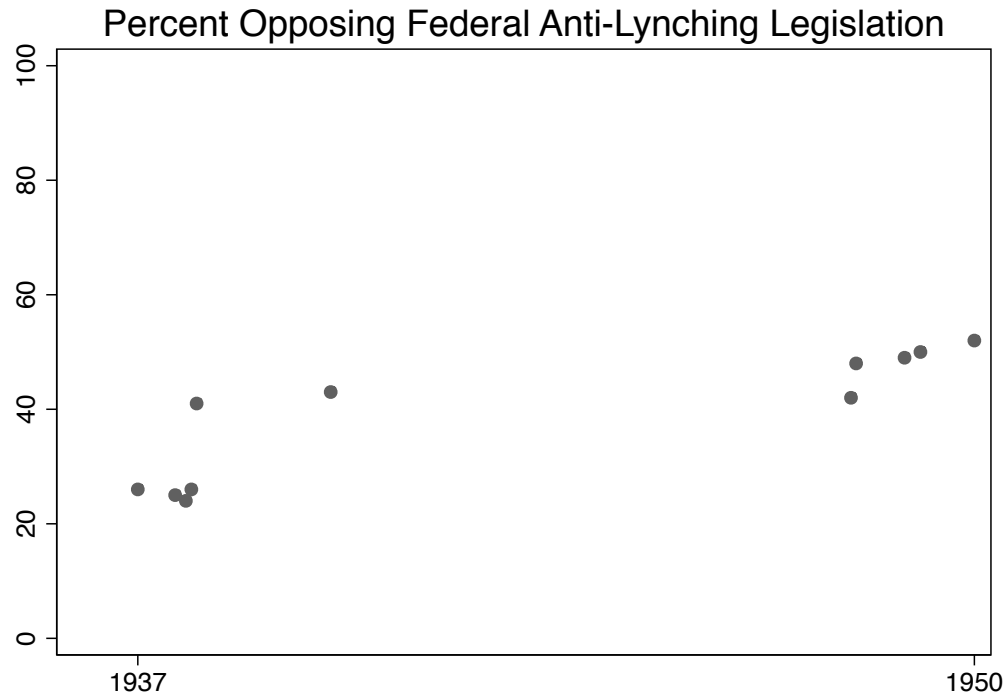


Figure 1: Opposition to Federal Antilynching Legislation, 1937-1950

Table 1: 1946 Minorities United Nations

	Treated Fairly	Job 2	Blood Diff	Blood DK	Intell- igent	Black Nurse	Japanese Disloyal	Japanese Citizen
Veteran	-0.25 (0.26)	-0.36 (0.22)	0.15 (0.25)	-0.24 (0.26)	0.08 (0.23)	0.06 (0.22)	-0.13 (0.27)	-0.26 (0.27)
Grammar	1.13** (0.39)	0.35 (0.24)	1.11*** (0.28)	0.25 (0.26)	-0.60* (0.26)	0.22 (0.25)	0.44 (0.28)	0.53 (0.31)
Some College	-1.01*** (0.26)	-0.93*** (0.27)	-0.24 (0.29)	-0.60 (0.34)	0.33 (0.26)	-0.60* (0.25)	-0.99** (0.36)	-0.37 (0.30)
Northeast	-0.79** (0.29)	-0.48* (0.24)	-0.16 (0.28)	-0.13 (0.29)	-0.21 (0.25)	-0.93*** (0.24)	-0.45 (0.31)	-0.57 (0.32)
South	0.19 (0.35)	1.06*** (0.27)	0.64* (0.29)	-0.04 (0.31)	1.61*** (0.28)	0.59* (0.27)	0.30 (0.31)	0.97** (0.31)
West	-0.84* (0.37)	-0.31 (0.32)	-0.14 (0.40)	0.67 (0.34)	0.04 (0.32)	-0.42 (0.31)	0.51 (0.37)	0.79* (0.39)
Age	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.06** (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.05* (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Constant	1.88* (0.77)	0.18 (0.64)	-1.33 (0.70)	-3.23*** (0.78)	-1.98** (0.67)	0.38 (0.64)	-2.61** (0.81)	-0.38 (0.77)
Pseudo $R^2$	0.103	0.092	0.063	0.055	0.101	0.067	0.076	0.085
Log likelihood	-223.35	-299.78	-234.22	-245.35	-287.84	-304.90	-212.95	-203.16
N	428	477	381	490	468	474	394	346

Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 2: 1948 Lynching

	Logit	OLS	Ordered Probit
Veteran	-0.39* (0.18)	-0.17* (0.08)	-0.22* (0.10)
Age	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Region 1	-0.65*** (0.19)	-0.28*** (0.08)	-0.36*** (0.11)
Region 3	0.47 (0.26)	0.20 (0.11)	0.25 (0.14)
Region 4	-0.34 (0.25)	-0.14 (0.11)	-0.18 (0.14)
Farm	0.09 (0.24)	0.04 (0.10)	0.05 (0.13)
Car	0.00 (0.17)	-0.00 (0.07)	-0.01 (0.09)
Constant	-0.32 (0.47)	0.87*** (0.20)	
Cut 1			0.04 (0.27)
Cut 2			0.30 (0.27)
Adjusted $R^2$		0.038	
Pseudo $R^2$	0.038		0.025
Log likelihood	-462.66		-718.50
N	702	781	781

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

For logit, 1 = left to states, 0 = federal intervention.

For OLS and ordered probit, 0 = federal intervention,

1 = don't know, 2 = left to states.

Table 3: 1961, Logit Models

	Sit-ins	Friend
Veteran	-0.39 (0.50)	0.89* (0.42)
Age	-0.03 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)
Grammar	0.23 (0.75)	-0.12 (0.56)
HS Grad	-0.03 (0.77)	0.21 (0.60)
College	-1.04 (0.77)	0.78 (0.71)
Constant	3.33* (1.66)	-0.78 (1.37)
Pseudo $R^2$	.05	.05
Log likelihood	-64.59	-89.55
N	137	144

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4: 1961, Ordered Probit Models

	Segregation 1	Segregation 2	Black Voting	Sit-ins	Anti-Integration	All Alike
Veteran	0.06 (0.22)	-0.13 (0.23)	-0.69** (0.26)	-0.18 (0.21)	0.28 (0.26)	0.19 (0.25)
Age	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)
Grammar	-0.03 (0.31)	0.50 (0.34)	0.24 (0.36)	0.12 (0.31)	-0.39 (0.36)	-0.11 (0.35)
HS Grad	-0.33 (0.33)	0.07 (0.34)	0.04 (0.37)	0.03 (0.32)	0.08 (0.38)	-0.08 (0.36)
College	-0.82* (0.36)	-0.61 (0.37)	-0.65 (0.48)	-0.38 (0.35)	1.03 (0.55)	1.07* (0.52)
Cut 1	-2.08** (0.77)	-1.63* (0.78)	0.32 (0.81)	-2.70*** (0.76)	-1.12 (0.86)	-1.49 (0.84)
Cut 2	-1.49* (0.76)	-0.51 (0.77)	1.04 (0.81)	-2.00** (0.73)	-0.78 (0.86)	-1.27 (0.84)
Cut 3	0.01 (0.75)		1.22 (0.81)	-1.48* (0.72)	-0.42 (0.86)	-0.82 (0.84)
Cut 4				0.09 (0.71)		
Pseudo $R^2$	.03	.07	.07	.02	.07	.05
Log likelihood	-147.05	-112.07	-112.94	-158.84	-117.77	-123.52
N	137	141	142	137	138	143

Standard errors in parentheses. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## Weighting

Consider the “Attitudes Toward Negroes” survey weights I created as an example. In this case, since women in the Northeast having attended at least some college represent 3.01 percent of the sample, but are in fact 1.34 percent of the over-19 population according to the 1940 Census, they are weighted  $\frac{1.34}{3.01} = 0.4451827243$  to correct for this oversample. Likewise, since women in the Northeast having attended only grammar school or less represent 4.64 percent of the sample, but are in fact 8.35 percent of the over-19 population according to the 1940 Census, they are weighted  $\frac{8.35}{4.64} = 1.7995689655$  to correct for this undersample. While the 32-category “eduWhites” weight is effectively the gold standard, it is not always possible when relevant information is not included in the dataset. In one instance, for example, an error in transcribing the region codes makes it impossible to create a 4-category regional classification. In this situation, I use a South/non-South dummy variable, resulting in a 16-category “eduWhites” weight. In the earliest surveys, education was often not measured directly. The preferable alternative here is a professional/nonprofessional occupation variable, which results in an 12-category “profWhites” weight. However, this is likewise not always available. In such situations, phone ownership can stand-in, resulting in a 12-category “phoneBlacksection” weight (though for whites only, in this case). Berinsky and Schickler’s protocol, available on the iPoll website, contains more specifics.