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Notes from the Editors

We would like to begin this issue with an announcement. As you may know, we, as editors of the *APSR*, along with the editors of many other leading political science journals, have committed to implementing the principles recommended by the APSA Ad Hoc Committee on Data Access and Research Transparency (DART). The statement from the DART group can be found here: http://www.dartstatement.org/. We are currently in the process of revising our submission guidelines to be consistent with these recommendations. We are very mindful of the diversity of research traditions in our discipline, and realize that "one size does not fit all"—so we wish to proceed with due care. However, we believe that these are timely changes that need to be made to promote research transparency and trust in our scholarship, and hence we are committed to implementing these changes in 2016. We will be discussing the proposed changes at the annual meeting in San Francisco at a special panel, and we invite everyone to attend.

In this issue, we highlight "civil society" —both the role played by organizations in promoting development and change and evaluating the effectiveness of efforts at building social capital in postconflict environments. Our first three articles focus on this theme, but clearly several other articles in this issue also deal with questions regarding the impact of organizations and groups particularly on sustainable development and violence. Other important questions addressed in this issue include: What is the appropriate role of religion in American society? What is the role of clan governance and political stability? What is the ideal size of a polity in promoting democratic competition? And what type of constitution-writing process is more likely to generate democratic outcomes?

In This Issue

How do human rights organizations (HROs) persuade individuals to take action? This question is relevant for all organizations that seek to persuade individuals to share their values and to take action, but has not garnered much attention. In **"Human Rights Organizations as Agents of Change: An Experimental Examination of Framing and Micromobilization,"** Kyla Jo McEntire, Michele Leiby, and Matthew Krain employ an experimental research design to evaluate whether information, personal stories, or motivational appeals were more successful at shaping values and encouraging action. They find that framing matters, but also that all three types of appeals are better at shaping values than at mobilizing for action. This finding has implications not only for HROs, but more broadly for organizations that seek to engage citizens.

In **"International Interventions to Build Social Capital: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Sudan,"** Alexandra Avdeenko and Michael J. Gilligan seek to evaluate the effects of a program in a postconflict setting designed to build social capital. The authors undertook a set of field experiments together with network and household surveys in a group of 24 villages—of which 16 are "treated" (i.e., they were provided with assistance of particular kinds by the Sudanese Community Development Fund) and eight are "control villages" (i.e., not provided these kinds of assistance). The results of their field experiments lead the authors to conclude that, compared to control communities, prosocial preferences were not higher in treatment villages some years after program assistance had been commenced. Similarly, membership in networks of different types, as revealed by a network survey, was also not higher in treatment villages. The paper has important implications regarding the effectiveness of social capital formation efforts in postconflict environments.

James D. Fearon, Macartan Humphreys, and Jeremy M. Weinstein in **"How Does Development Assistance Affect Collective Action Capacity? Results from a Field Experiment in Post-Conflict Liberia"** use a field experiment in Liberia and a combination of survey and behavioral measures to assess the effects of community-driven reconstruction on a range of social outcomes. The authors find that such an intervention had a positive effect on collective action as individuals in villages receiving the reconstruction aid exhibited more cooperative behaviors. The results, however, hold only in communities where the group tasked to play the behavioral game consisted of both men and women, with no significant effects in communities where there was an all-female group in charge. This paper provides important insights on the building of social capital and interactions with gender in post-conflict environments.

In **"Motivational Crowding in Sustainable Development Interventions,"** Arun Agrawal, Ashwini Chhatre, and Elisabeth R. Gerber analyze the effects of a sustainable development program in the Indian Himalaya on individuals' motivations for conserving forest resources. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the program provided participants with either informational, material, or communal benefits with the intent to instill pro-environmental motivations. Contrary to the assumptions underlying numerous development and conservation projects in developing countries, both the informational and the monetary incentives under certain conditions replaced or "crowded out" environmental motivations with economic motivations. These results suggest a critical need for rethinking the design of sustainable development interventions in the future.

Jakana L. Thomas and Kanisha D. Bond note that there is substantial variation in both the presence of and the roles that women fulfill in different violent political organizations. In **"Women's Participation in Violent Political Organizations,"** the authors theorize about the reasons for this variation. Their theory leads

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Thomas and Bond to hypothesize that the organization's size, tactics, and attitude toward gender equality will influence the inclusion of women. They evaluate their hypotheses on the basis of an original dataset on women's participation in such organizations and supplement their quantitative analysis with a couple of case studies. They conclude that the characteristics of violent political organizations are an important factor in explaining the presence and roles of women in such groups.

The role of interest groups in the legislative process has received considerable attention in the literature. Considerably less attention has been paid to the role of interest groups in executive decision making. In their article **"Influence and the Administrative Process: Lobbying the U.S. President's Office of Management and Budget,"** Simon F. Haeder and Susan Webb Yackee examine 1,500 proposed agency rules that were reviewed by the OMB to see what happens to those rules when interest groups lobby the OMB. The results of their selection model are clear and the effect sizes are large; the Rule Change Index increases with every additional group lobbying the OMB. The effect is even stronger when professional lobbying firms are involved and the lobbyists represent business interests. Public interest lobbyists do not fare nearly as well.

The United States is a strikingly religious country. Alexis de Tocqueville was one of the first foreign observers to remark upon this fact, and to assign religion a central place in the story of American success. But what exactly is this place? In **"Tocqueville on Religion, the Enlightenment, and the Democratic Soul,"** Aaron L. Herold argues that Tocqueville was actually concerned about the *weakness*, the shallowness, of American religious sentiment. The Enlightenment philosophies that so influenced the Americans did not make adequate allowance for the innate human longing for immortality and self-sacrifice, and American religion had become thin as a result. What Tocqueville believes democracies need, Herold argues, is new outlets, religious or not, for these fundamental longings. Absent this, the longings will express themselves in uncontrolled, and possibly harmful, ways. This is an insight of importance not only to Americans, but to all who wish to shore up democracy.

In **"Clan Governance and State Stability: The Relationship between Female Subordination and Political Order,"** Valerie M. Hudson, Donna Lee Bowen, and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen show that stability and security are hampered in states where clans—or kin-based groups—remain influential in political governance. Clan-based societies tend to be strongly patrilineal and severely restrict the role of women in public life. To evaluate the impact of clan governance empirically, Hudson, Bowen, and Nielsen construct a Clan Governance Index, validate it against other measures of clan governance, and show that the presence of clan governance is associated with greater instability and insecurity. The authors suggests that change away from strongly patrilineal structures to greater gender equality significantly affects state stability and security.

Rachel M. Stein observes that the democratic peace literature has generally treated democracies as a homogeneous category of states and notes that democracies differ substantially in their propensity to initiate wars and investigates the reasons for this variation. In **"War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies,"** she theorizes that cross-national differences in public opinion explain the difference in war initiation by democracies. Specifically, Stein theorizes that a public's "vengefulness" matters. She uses retention of the death penalty as a proxy for broad public endorsement of revenge and finds that democracies that have retained the death penalty longer are more likely to initiate wars. Stein's work thus provides a cautionary note to the assumption that the spread of democracy will reduce the frequency of war.

In **"Demography and Democracy: A Global, District-level Analysis of Electoral Contestation,"** John Gerring, Maxwell Palmer, Jan Teorell, and Dominic Zarecki tackle a fundamental question in the study of democracy—what is the relationship between polity size and democracy? Robert Dahl argued that democracy flourishes best in smaller units, in part because accountability is easier and citizens have greater access. However, the authors argue against that proposition, saying that size is related positively to contestation, and that this is due to a "mechanical effect." They argue, rather, that contestation will increase with constituency size. They introduce a new and important data set, the Multi-level Election Archive, and support their arguments with both quantitative and qualitative evidence. The theorizing is well done, and the analysis is exhaustive. Just as important, the authors conclude by delving into the possible policy implications of their findings, identifying important conditional effects of any lessons that policymakers might wish to draw.

Constitution writing is a critical part of the process of founding a new political regime. For those concerned to advance democracy, what type of constitution-writing process is more likely to generate democratic outcomes? In **"When Talk Trumps Text: The Democratizing Effects of Deliberation during Constitution-Making, 1974–2011,"** Todd A. Eisenstadt, A. Carl LeVan, and Tofigh Maboudi use data covering 132 new constitutions in 118 countries, from 1974 through 2011, to gauge whether democratizing the adoption process leads to greater democracy after implementation. They find that democracy deepened in only half the cases—but why? The authors distinguish among popular participation at the drafting stage, the debating stage, and the ratification stage, and find that most salient is participation in the initial, drafting stage. The results are of great importance for constitution writers and advocates of democracy. It is critical to get popular "buy-in" at the beginning of the constitution-writing process; this appears to be more important than participation at any other stage.

Haifeng Huang, in **"International Knowledge and Domestic Evaluations in a Changing Society: The Case of China,"** addresses an important, yet relatively unexplored question—What is the relationship between citizens' knowledge and information of foreign countries,

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particularly advanced democracies, in an authoritarian context, and how does that affect their evaluation of their own country and government? Using unique survey and experimental data, he finds that Chinese citizens with more positive perceptions and especially overestimation of socioeconomic conditions in foreign countries have more negative evaluations of China and the Chinese government. However, when correcting for this misinformation he finds that assessments of China improve. He argues that these results contribute to the study of politically relevant knowledge, and shed new light on the nuances of public opinion and anti-status quo sentiments in an authoritarian regime.

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[1] See http://www.aapor.org/standards.asp

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[3] *Behavior Genetics* 42 (2012): 1–2, DOI 10.1007/s10519–011-9504-zvi

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