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Notes from the Editors

IN THIS ISSUE

Virtually all of this issue's articles challenge conventional belief in some area of political science.

Race in U.S. political history. If the Civil War freed and enfranchised African-Americans, by 1874 the tide had begun to recede; and the corrupt bargain that settled the Presidential election of 1876 but ended Reconstruction and hastened the rollback, not only of the "equal protection of the laws" that the Fourteenth Amendment had guaranteed, but of voting rights and desegregation. By the 1890s, "Jim Crow" and racial hierarchy were again entrenched.

In that light, it has seemed puzzling that the great emancipationist and pioneering African-American leader Frederick Douglass—a great friend and admirer of President Abraham Lincoln—chose precisely in 1876, at the dedication of the "Freedmen's Monument" to Lincoln funded entirely by contributions from African-Americans, both to remind his listeners of Lincoln's own racism *and* to embrace what seemed a deeper optimism (in part informed by how rapidly Lincoln's own views had evolved) about the future of race relations in the United States. The first aspect evidently shocked Douglass's eminent audience of senators, representatives, governors, and justices; the second has seemed, especially to more recent readers, to embrace an almost Pollyannaish denial of reversals that were already evident.

Not so, argues Peter C. Myers in our lead article, "'A Good Work for Our Race To-Day': Interests, Virtues, and the Achievement of Justice in Frederick Douglass's Freedmen's Monument Speech." The by-now prevalent view, Myers contends, both misapprehends Douglass's rhetorical subtlety and underestimates his understanding of the long-term course of racial relations in America. In this speech, Myers argues convincingly, Douglass sought to recast the hagiographic memory of the martyred Lincoln in a way that would appeal to the interests and virtues of both black and white Americans—and that would, despite the current setbacks, set out a credible theory about the long-term prospects of racial relations in America. The speech thus, as Myers puts it, "epitomizes a theory of racial progress that challenges recent, pessimistic readings of America's racial history and prospects."

Are survey experiments externally valid? An even sharper challenge to reigning orthodoxy is mounted by Jason Barabas and Jennifer Jerit, whose findings suggest that we curb our enthusiasm for one of political science's most popular new methods of the last two decades. In "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" Barabas and Jerit contrast the results of survey experiments on public opinion on Medicare and immigration with real world events that the survey experiments were designed to mimic. Although the former showed that exposure to policy information had important effects on both knowledge and attitudes, parallel "natural experiments" found that well-publicized government announcements of the same information had much less impact, especially on policy-relevant attitudes. The authors suggest that greater caution is in order when we try to extrapolate from survey experiments to the real world. We anticipate, indeed hope, that this work will inspire further study and debate.

Direct democracy and public goods. Most of us have believed, based largely on early cross-sectional comparisons among Swiss cantons and U.S. states, that direct democracy limits public spending and restricts the supply of public goods. Those studies, however, were inevitably suspect on grounds of endogeneity (maybe a local taste for fewer public goods expressed itself in the enactment of direct democracy). In "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia," Benjamin A. Olken uses a randomized field experiment among Indonesian villages to suggest the exact opposite of the conventional view: The use of plebiscites (as opposed to representative assemblies) to choose development projects in a randomized subset of villages led to a *greater* supply of public goods, as well as higher satisfaction, increased knowledge, and bigger perceived benefits. Based on these results, students of American or comparative politics will have to entertain the possibility that frugal, directly democratic jurisdictions might become even more frugal if democracy were less direct.

Do small changes in turnout affect partisan election outcomes? Another standard claim, and one similarly plagued by endogeneity, is that higher election-day turnout in the United States favors Democrats. Also in the literature, though not previously tested, is the claim that higher turnout tends to hurt incumbents. In "Estimating the Electoral Effects of Voter Turnout," Thomas G. Hansford and Brad T. Gomez take advantage of the fact that Election Day rain can depress turnout, but not vice versa, to solve the endogeneity problem. In particular, they build an instrumental variable for turnout from county level weather data and use it to estimate the causal effect of turnout on presidential election outcomes. In this case, rather than overturning the conventional wisdom, Hansford and Gomez find surprising support for extant claims, and also for a third: That increased turnout simply makes electoral outcomes more volatile.

Are British backbenchers powerless? Almost all students of modern British politics have emphasized the sharp divide in both major parties between front- and backbenchers, with the latter seemingly having little voice in the choice of ministers (shadow or real) or of policies. But appearances deceive, say Christopher Kam and his co-authors[1] in "Ministerial Selection and Intraparty Organization in the Contemporary British Parliament." Among both Labour and Conservatives,

[1] William T. Bianco, Itai Sened, and Regina Smyth.

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appointments to the front bench fall disproportionately to members whose preferences approximate those of the uncovered set of backbenchers' bliss points. Indeed, promotions to ministerial (or shadow ministerial) rank prove to be more sensitive to backbenchers' views than to those of the party leaders. Choice of British frontbenchers may therefore be just another case in which agents almost perfectly anticipate the demands of their principals.

Fixed versus floating exchange rates. Economists and political scientists have long emphasized the importance of this choice, not least because in an era of freely moving capital only floating exchange rates are compatible with monetary autonomy (a clear implication of the famed Mundell-Fleming "unholy trinity"). On the other hand, a fixed exchange rate can serve as a commitment strategy against inflation. As to what influences the choice, the reigning belief has come from the Optimal Currency Area theory originally advanced by Mundell: Countries are likelier to "peg" their exchange rates as they: (a) trade more with each other and (b) experience symmetric economic shocks; or—modern students would add—when they (c) have recently experienced high inflation. But that view, argues David Andrew Singer in "Migrant Remittances and Exchange Rate Regimes in the Developing World," overlooks an important aspect: in many developing countries, migrant remittances contribute importantly to GDP and foreign-currency reserves; and, moreover, move *countercyclically* (i.e., remittances increase precisely when a downturn or natural disaster leaves the folks at home needier). To the extent that a developing country's leaders know they can rely on such a remittance "cushion" from their citizens overseas, they are likelier to choose a fixed exchange rate. This makes sense theoretically and, somewhat surprisingly, turns out to have strong empirical support. While his makes perfect sense in the larger context of optimal currency area theory—migrant remittances are, after all, like tourism an "invisible" form of trade—they have not previously been noticed in this context, and, as Singer argues, their countercyclicality puts them in a special category.

The extension of party conflict to new issues. It has been widely noticed that the two major U.S. political parties have become polarized on social issues on which they did not formerly disagree, or at least not so sharply. How has this happened? And why, contrary to leading theoretical work, did the emergence of conflict on a new dimension not suppress conflict on older ones, namely, economics and race? A big part of the story, argue Geoffrey C. Layman and his co-authors[2] in "Activists and Conflict Extension in American Party Politics," is that the open nomination systems of U.S. parties encourage candidates for office to mobilize new groups in support of their nominations. As new activists are thus drawn into a party, older activists—especially those most committed to the party—align their views with those of the new ones. By this means, parties extend issue-conflict to new issues without undermining party conflict on older ones. Evidence from cross-sectional and panel surveys of delegates to the party nominating conventions is marshaled in support of this view. To anyone who has followed the ideological contortions by which the once socially libertarian editorial page of the *Wall Street Journal* has taken up the drumbeat against abortion and in favor of "faith-based" social initiatives, this may come as no surprise. But surely the new research agenda will involve discovering just how far polarization and conflict extend, or will extend, from party elites and activists into the mass public.

Is diplomatic talk really so cheap? Students of international relations have widely believed that threatened states must signal their intent to resist by deeds rather than words: alliances, armaments, troops. But diplomatic communications can, by themselves, affect adversaries' perceptions and avert conflict, contends Robert F. Trager[3] in "Diplomatic Calculus in Anarchy: How Communication Matters." Trager develops a more nuanced model of crisis bargaining that allows the content and quality of diplomatic signals to vary. A direct implication of the model is that war can occur simply because a state resolved on resistance fails to communicate its intentions. Moreover, simulations based on the model show that this kind of diplomatic "cheap talk" in fact reduces the likelihood of conflict.

Quantitative versus/with qualitative methods. In this issue's Forum, Marcus Kreuzer takes issue with the way in which qualitative, historical work is sometimes used in quantitative studies, in "Historical Knowledge and Quantitative Analysis: The Case of the Origins of Proportional Representation." Attempting a replication of two major studies of why and when proportional representation was adopted, namely those of Cusack, Iversen, and Soskice (CIS) and of Boix, Kreuzer finds it relatively easy to replicate Boix's work but finds more difficulties in the codings that CIS employ, and takes issue also with their case selection (e.g., exclusion of post-World War I East European cases). Kreuzer goes on to suggest some general guidelines for what he sees as the necessarily qualitative and interpretive basis of efforts at quantitative historical comparison.

CIS and Boix respond, respectively—in "Coevolution of Capitalism and Political Representation: The Choice of Electoral Systems" and "Electoral Markets, Party Strategies, and Proportional Representation"—both taking the occasion to offer new evidence in support of their respective interpretations. The exchange, we believe, furthers a necessary dialogue between adherents of the two methods and pushes us toward what has come to be called "multi-method" inquiry. (One should note how many recent *APSR* articles have, in fact, combined qualitative and quantitative evidence.) We anticipate that this exchange will wind up on more than a few graduate

[2] Thomas M. Carsey, John C. Green, Richard Herrera, and Rosalyn Cooperman.

[3] Trager is Assistant Professor of Political Science at UCLA. In accordance with our standard procedures for avoiding conflicts of interest, the review and editing of this article were handled by two external members of the APSR Editorial Board—Kenneth Schulz and Curt Signorino—whose expertise and contribution we gratefully acknowledge.

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reading lists, and that *cognoscenti* will want to continue the debate about how to code particular cases, as of course they are welcome to do on any of the participants' blogs.

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