

SURVEY ESSAY

Reductionism and its Critics in Political Science

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Changing Minds or Changing Channels? Partisan News in an Age of Choice, by **Kevin Arceneaux** and **Martin Johnson**. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. 238 pp. \$25.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226047300.

The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics, by **W. Lance Bennett** and **Alexandra Segerberg**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 240 pp. \$29.99 paper. ISBN: 9781107642720.

Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do, by **Andrew Gelman**. Expanded edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. \$18.95 paper. ISBN: 9780691143934.

Changing Minds, If Not Hearts: Political Remedies for Racial Conflict, by **James M. Glaser** and **Timothy J. Ryan**. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013. 182 pp. \$59.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780812245288.

Predisposed: Liberals, Conservatives, and the Biology of Political Preferences, by **John R. Hibbing**, **Kevin B. Smith**, and **John R. Alford**. New York: Routledge, 2014. 288 pp. \$30.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780415535878.

Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time, by **Ira Katznelson**. New York: Liveright Publishing, 2013. 706 pp. \$19.95 paper. ISBN: 9780871407382.

The Rationalizing Voter, by **Milton Lodge** and **Charles S. Taber**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 281 pp. \$32.99 paper. ISBN: 9780521176149.

Making Sense of Public Opinion: American Discourses About Immigration and Social Programs, by **Claudia Strauss**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 424 pp. \$34.99 paper. ISBN: 9781107688698.

There is an interesting institutional difference between political science and sociology as it is organized in most American universities. Political science—like, in many ways, anthropology and psychology—is divided relatively rigidly into subfields, each of which functions relatively autonomously. Like disciplines in general, these subfields—American politics, comparative politics, international relations, political methodology, and political theory—tend to be simultaneously very productive internally and somewhat insular with respect to cross-subfield work.

Sociology's subdivisions are substantially less rigid, which results in an interesting trade-off between subdisciplinary progress and cross-fertilization. In this somewhat haphazard review of several recent books from political science—recommended by University of North Carolina political science colleagues—I will highlight strengths from which sociologists might borrow as well as intellectual weaknesses that might benefit from sociologists' insights.

An important strain of current political science, particularly in American politics, is boldly reductionist, seeking to isolate root causes in the characteristics of individual

voters or single pathways. This paradigm is very rich and productive, and it has produced some of the field's most enduring findings (think, for example, of *The American Voter*, which has essentially defined the study of voting for over 50 years). But it is also quite constraining, as scholars in this paradigm seek to demonstrate that one specific set of predictors is truly foundational. These quests for foundational causes often end up ignoring the mediating and moderating processes that may well have more important effects than the foundations. In this review I begin with detailed discussions of two books in this tradition, then consider several others that, in one way or another, seek to transcend it.

The poster child for the reductionist approach is *Predisposed*, by John R. Hibbing, Kevin B. Smith, and John R. Alford. It builds on years of work by this team on genetic causes for political viewpoints. Much of this work uses twin studies to partition the variance in political preferences among genetic, shared environmental, and unshared environmental causes. The heritability of a political outlook is the extent to which that outlook is more similar between monozygotic ("identical") twin pairs than it is between heterozygotic ("fraternal") pairs. There are other methods, too, including focusing on specific candidate genes and using Genome-Wide Association Studies (GWAS), both of which aim to identify specific genetic codes for political traits.

The book's central claim is summed up well on page 91: "Just as flies' taste for beer is biologically based and relates to their behavior, humans' tastes are often biologically based and relate to their behavior, right down to political orientations." Why? Well, political orientations are ways of comprehending the world. Different people react to the same stimuli differently. "Each person experiences the world differently because the biological machinery responsible for that experience . . . differs from one person to the next" (p. 114; emphasis added). Much of the actual argument proceeds by analogy. Brain injury, for example, can cause personality change (pp. 147–148), so, by analogy, brain structures can cause political orientations. Polygraphs use physiological indicators to assess psychological states, so, by

analogy, physiological characteristics might cause beliefs and behaviors, including political ones. In each case, though, the extension to political orientations originates with a much simpler example; the reader is asked to ignore the fact that political orientations are more complicated than whether or not one is knowingly lying.

This ontological complexity re-emerges as a methodological point in Chapter Seven ("Politics Right Down to Your DNA"). It turns out that attempts to locate specific genes for political orientation have been generally disappointing, though they have turned up some weak associations. GWAS approaches suffer from many false positives, and "findings from molecular genetic studies have not replicated well" (p. 192). Hibbing et al.'s view is that "fairly small genetic differences get magnified by environmental forces to create distinct political predispositions" (p. 227). Political conversions are identified as "going home" (p. 227)—as realigning political position with natural inclination. But this view of environmental forces enormously underestimates the complexity of environmental influences—yes, they may magnify genetic predispositions, but they may also distort or diminish any such predispositions. And, most interestingly for sociologists, they may have contradictory effects at different analytical levels and in different historical contexts.

The most basic claim in *Predisposed* is likely both true and not particularly important: the claim that there is some non-negligible heritability involved in people's political development. That is because broad-brush personality traits are modestly heritable, and personality presumably figures in individuals' political orientations. But in order to become political *outlooks*, these traits have to be refracted through a thick haze of mediators: political institutions, party coalitions, epistemic cultures, media regimes, historical contingencies, and emotional states, to name a few. And by structuring, teaching, and distorting those traits, that haze is likely a far more important cause of political outlook than the presocial dispositions examined here.

Some of this complexity is on display in Milton Lodge and Charles S. Taber's *The Rationalizing Voter*. Like *Predisposed*, this book is the capstone on a long scholarly

literature: the motivated reasoning literature. In a nutshell, this literature—based largely on experimental designs—holds that most, if not all, political reasoning is essentially retrospective. Rather than assessing the evidence and arguments to determine a position, people begin with the position they prefer and rationalize that position by selecting and reinterpreting evidence to fit. This rests on current thinking in psychology and neighboring disciplines about “dual-process models” of cognition: cool, deliberative, conscious cognition is one process, but it tends to be dwarfed by “hot,” automatic, subconscious cognition, because the latter can be accomplished faster and with less investment than the former.

On the very first page of the preface, the book lays out its object: “unconscious political thinking and the subterranean forces that determine how citizens evaluate political leaders, groups, and issues” (p. *xiii*). As in *Predisposed*, the goal is to come up with an abstract, general model of the political subject based on psychological findings. Much of this research is very strong, and sociologists ought to pay close attention to the overwhelming evidence that much human action is habitual or automatic, and furthermore that even when actors seem to be acting in conscious, deliberative ways, they may well be engaging in rationalization instead of the calm consideration of evidence and argument. (It’s a bit ironic, though, that a book whose point is that people are rarely able to assess evidence and argument even when they want to is written as a dispassionate presentation of evidence and argument!)

The authors spend a great deal of the book building toward a general model of the political actor, a model they summarize at the end of the book in what they call their *JQP* (John Q. Public) model. The model incorporates affective, experiential, and learning components and is designed to be implemented in a computer simulation that can then be used to examine how hypothetical *JQPs* will react to differences in the environment such as varying information, preferences, and emotional responses. *JQP* is a truly remarkable achievement. It reflects a triumph of this style of research: a fully functioning model of the theorized actor

that can be assessed against competing visions of political actors. And in the final chapter, the book pits that actor against other models promoted in political science and shows a positive result.

But the triumph of *JQP* also shows the weakness of its paradigm. Like other literature in the dual-process and motivated-learning paradigms, virtually no attention is paid to the key question of where “automatic” reasoning comes from. At times, the book veers toward an untenable claim that automatic reasoning is more authentic than deliberative, though it never makes that claim explicit. How, for example, does it come to pass that liberal-leaning subjects “automatically” react relatively positively to pro-labor and pro-environment cues, even though the coalition that brings these two interests together is neither ideologically necessary nor historically persistent? This is particularly concerning when so many of the studies are made up of college students or convenience samples.

The *JQP* model contains no opportunities for subjects to be challenged, either intellectually or emotionally, on their beliefs; no institutional context making certain actions easier or harder; no cultural repertoire of belief or action; no dynamics in the environment for action facilitating or foreclosing particular directions. That means it is ultimately limited in similar ways to the model from *Predisposed*: it identifies individual-level tendencies when so much of the action in political outcomes happens at the supra-individual level.

The same can certainly not be said of Andrew Gelman’s well-known *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State*. Gelman uses representative data about voting behavior to model state-by-state predictors of elections. Thus while the data themselves are individual-level, the argument is in the aggregate and the actors are set within appropriate contexts. Gelman uses David Brooks’s silly “One Nation, Slightly Divisible” (Brooks 2001) as a foil; Brooks claimed that Red State-Blue State differences were essentially about taste and lifestyle, not income or social class. Gelman shows convincingly that old-fashioned class, not consumption-based culture, is the primary predictor of individual and state vote choices. More specifically, the interaction

between place and class forms the backbone of Gelman's argument. Across many different states and regions within states, individual-level income continues to be among the biggest predictors of vote choice.

The bottom line for Gelman, then, is that voting remains mostly polarized by class, with lower-income voters breaking more for Democrats and higher-income ones for Republicans. And this pattern holds true within "red" states like Kansas and "blue" states like Connecticut, as well as swing states like Ohio. Responding to Thomas Frank's popular book *What's the Matter with Kansas*, Gelman asked in a blog post, "what's the matter with Connecticut?" In fact, it is in the wealthy state of Connecticut that the relationship between income and vote choice is muted relative to national trends.

Gelman's book is less purely reductionist than are the prior two; the historical and contextual narratives in the book retain more of the complexity and even contingency that produced the observed outcomes. But the intellectual style is similar, in that the book identifies a single dimension of political behavior and isolates that dimension from its roots and its institutional setting.

The next two books mitigate that problem by paying specific attention to the institutional processes that aggregate individual decisions into collective outcomes. In *Changing Minds or Changing Channels?*, Kevin Arcenaux and Martin Johnson take up the question of the influence partisan media outlets have on individuals' opinions. The research on media influence has taken place largely in laboratories, demonstrating that exposure to particular forms of news—such as partisan news like Fox News or MSNBC—can affect individuals' beliefs and opinions, albeit more weakly than one might think. Other research has shown that the changing media regime affects people's political knowledge. What this book does is demonstrate that the media regime—which channels and other media streams are available and how—moderates the effects of partisan news on opinion. Essentially, the ability for people to select into media exposure blunts the effects of those media. That means things seem more polarized than they are because selection effects add to exposure effects.

Thus, an institutional configuration (the structure of media) changes the individual-level effects of partisan media. That configuration is part of what I referred to as the "thick haze of mediators" that make individual-level differences relevant. The book presents an "active audience theory" to account for these aggregate effects. The theory is effective for that use, but it doesn't account for the fact that interpretation of information and ideas is, itself, an active process. The settings where people consume and discuss media, and the backgrounds they bring to media, affect what those media's messages mean to them.

A similar approach animates *The Logic of Connective Action*, a careful study of the role of social media in facilitating and changing (though, interestingly, not hampering) contentious politics. W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg present a typology of the kinds of movements that can be facilitated through social media. It comes as no real surprise that social-media-based movements tend to prefer less organization, less hierarchy, and more self-expression. Different online-enabled movements are different from one another, though; some, like Occupy, tend to be extremely decentralized, while others are more hybrids and maintain a level of organizational control. That's important because, while the former facilitate more self-expression (at least for relatively privileged movement members), the latter seem more effective for movement outcomes and longevity.

If anything, Bennett and Segerberg underplay individual-level effects such as selection into, and social capital within, online networks. If people choose which online movements to be part of based in part on individual styles and preferences, that cannot be attributed solely to the character of the network itself. But nevertheless, this book, like *Changing Minds or Changing Channels?*, pays real and welcome attention to the institutional climates that structure individual political action.

But institutional context alone is not sufficient to capture that thick haze. Each of the final three books I'll consider uses a different approach to develop a more thorough assessment of the haze's moderating process. In *Changing Minds, If Not Hearts*, James

M. Glaser and Timothy J. Ryan begin with an individual-level model not so different from *JQP*. They accept the idea that much political reasoning is automatic and that the unconscious attitudes implicated in that reasoning may be impervious to change (although this is an important question that deserves further investigation). But they also demonstrate that, given specific cues, people's automatic reasoning on questions of racial fairness can be tempered by information and deliberation. In other words: even if the political subject is essentially *JQP*, she may not act in that capacity if the context favors a more reasoned choice.

If Glaser and Ryan use psychological insights to transcend the simplified models, Claudia Strauss uses a model of culture that will be familiar to sociologists to conceptualize the nature and dynamics of public opinion. It may not really be fair to include *Making Sense of Public Opinion* here, as the author is an anthropologist. But the book's logic speaks directly to the concerns of political science and does so in a way that both sociologists and political scientists ought to pay attention to. Strauss provides a detailed model for the way people form opinions out of the "opinion communities" they are part of. But her model is far from reductive. Rather, it assumes both access to numerous such communities and active work on the part of people sorting out the discourse in those communities to arrive at an opinion—formed only "when someone is supposed to state an opinion" (p. 111). It is an elegant, complex theory of individual-level opinion formation in the context of cultural and institutional moderators and should be required reading as an antidote to the individual acting subject models in the books at the beginning of this review.

Finally, where Strauss brings in culture, Ira Katznelson's magisterial *Fear Itself* deploys history to account for the vast complexity of the origins of contemporary American politics. The first chapter alone makes this book worth reading. That chapter lays out the historical role of the New Deal, not just as an economic intervention in the face of the Depression but also as a fundamental shift in what people expect of politics and policy. The New Deal ushered in nothing

less than a new vision of the state and a new framework for doing politics. Katznelson's careful analysis of the historical dynamics that made that so shows why reductionism is unnecessary for making a causal claim.

Beyond the first chapter, the book details the ways Jim Crow, World War II, and labor politics coincided to produce strange coalitions as well as ideological constraints and opportunities. The power held by southern Democratic lawmakers meant that civil rights was off the agenda. But the international environment favored a demonstration that American democracy was effective and representative. Roosevelt capitalized on that dynamic, relying on southern Democrats to support the New Deal's class-based mitigation in order to avoid having to confront racial justice. Both cause and effect in this narrative are complex. A combination of local and national culture, international political environment, and inside-the-beltway strategizing produces the New Deal's successful implementation. Meanwhile, the cultural and institutional effects of the New Deal set up the ways people—*JQP* included—imagine the possibilities of, and their preferences for, state action.

Political science has made great headway with relatively abstract models of human cognition and behavior that reduce political processes to aggregations of individual thought and action. Political sociology can learn from that exercise and from its critics. When political science ignores the social, institutional, cultural, and historical mechanisms that moderate between such thought and action and their collective outcomes, it generates models that are likely wrong but still instructive. Sociologists ought to resist thinking of these models as accurate, but should consider them and their extensions as ways of simplifying and abstracting ideas of social and political behavior.

Reference

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REVIEW ESSAYS

Unforeseen Roads to Antiracism

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Books of this caliber are few and far between. Moreover, it is rare to find a study that so deeply engages questions of the relationship between race, immigration policy, and form of government. In this truly path-breaking book, *Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas*, David Scott FitzGerald and David Cook-Martín meticulously document and analyze the immigration laws of 22 major countries in the Americas from 1790 to 2010. The authors' rigorous comparative and multi-method approach, which includes close attention to socio-historic context and the domestic and global dimensions of policy making, has resulted in an unprecedented study. In the book, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín engage in a broad regional analysis to illustrate how immigration policies travel across national borders. Specifically, they explain *how* and *why* policies of overt immigrant selection based on race, ethnicity, and nationality became unpopular and were consequently dismantled across the region toward the latter half of the twentieth century. The authors diligently track the sequence of events associated with this regional policy shift, which began in Latin America and then spread to North America through policy diffusion. In a surprising twist, they reveal how the most liberal-democratic countries were the last to shed their racist immigration policies, challenging conventional wisdom that liberalism and racism cannot coexist.

FitzGerald and Cook-Martín complement their regional story with an in-depth qualitative analysis of six well-chosen case studies: the United States, Canada, Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina. Each of these cases contributes a unique angle on understandings of policy diffusion and of the interaction between domestic and foreign politics. The

Culling the Masses: The Democratic Origins of Racist Immigration Policy in the Americas, by **David Scott FitzGerald** and **David Cook-Martín**. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. 512 pp. \$55.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780674729049.

case of the United States illustrates how the world's longest-standing democracy promoted racially selective immigration policies for a longer period than other nations within the Americas. Ultimately, it was an investment in global relationships that pushed the United States toward the eradication of such policies. Canada represents the clearest case of how involvement with multilateral institutions can shape immigration selection policies. However, the Canadian case also illustrates how, in a democratic society, anti-immigrant citizen groups can shape national immigration policy. The Cuban story is one of policy diffusion directly influenced by the United States. It also exemplifies how state-sponsored anti-racist rhetoric can comfortably exist alongside practices of overt racism in immigration policy. The negative case of Mexico is particularly fascinating in that leaders implemented racially-restrictive immigration laws despite the country's lack of success in attracting immigrants. The Brazilian case demonstrates the power of its national myth of racial democracy to contextualize debates over immigration policies. Finally, Argentina was faced with a unique demographic situation that resulted in a lack of racially discriminatory policies. The Argentine case also shows how racism among elites is not always a sufficient condition to stimulate the imposition

of racist immigration policies, especially in the absence of popular groups who favor such policies. From these well-presented case studies, we see how international and national contexts interact to influence the formation of immigration policy.

Of the many noteworthy contributions that this book offers to scholarly knowledge of law, immigration, race, and political regimes, three stand out in particular: the methodological approach, the incorporation of domestic and geopolitical dimensions of policy making, and the examination of the relationship between racism and liberalism. Regarding methodology, this study is both innovative and massive. It would have been impossible for the authors to identify the underlying processes and mechanisms of policy diffusion (diplomatic leverage, cultural emulation, and strategic adjustment) without the inclusion of such an extensive list of cases, the examination of over two centuries of immigration laws (while paying attention to event sequencing), and the use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Using a mixed-methods approach, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín coded immigration laws for negative discrimination and positive preferences as represented in constitutions, statutes, published regulations of immigration and nationality, bilateral and multilateral treaties, and court cases. Recognizing the importance of *de facto* regulations, the authors also engaged in extensive archival research, analyzing legislative debates for the six case studies. Taken as a whole, the authors' methodological approach placed them in the unique position of being able to develop a *causal* story about immigration policy change, identifying how and why racialized preferences in immigration laws traveled across time and space in the way they did. Prior studies may have failed to uncover the larger story presented in this book due to a reliance on a limited number of cases and/or historical periods.

Another major contribution of *Culling the Masses* is its incorporation of both the "vertical" (domestic) and "horizontal" (international) dimensions of policy making. Based on their multi-dimension analytic approach, the authors produce findings that challenge previous explanations for shifts in immigration law, as many of these explanations

primarily focus on the role of domestic politics in shaping immigration policy, an unfortunate weakness of the immigration literature. In addition to addressing national and international dynamics, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín assess the relative *strength* of horizontal versus vertical pressures under various sets of conditions. They show how government leaders were most likely to curtail overtly exclusionary policies when such policies threatened their relationships with other countries. In contrast, vertical dynamics were more important in geopolitically weaker countries or when cross-class alliances formed in national political contexts that were receptive to popular demands. Labor unions, in particular, have historically shaped immigration policies in the direction of race-based exclusion. Although FitzGerald and Cook-Martín are clear that there is no "iron law" that governs the creation and recreation of immigration policies, they do conclude that "international politics remains the strongest ultimate guarantor against overt ethnic discrimination" (p. 33). Overall, the authors' examination of how vertical and horizontal dynamics interact to affect policy development reveals important new insights.

In another major contribution to the literature, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín ask: What is the relationship between liberalism, democracy, and racism? Adopting a definition of classical liberalism that includes individual rights to "freedom of movement, exchange, and political participation" (p. 3), the authors conclude that "democratic input—whether in its liberal or populist variations—historically has been linked to racist immigration policy in the Americas" (p. 2). This assertion directly challenges common and normative perspectives that liberalism and racism are incompatible. That said, this finding is not new, as FitzGerald and Cook-Martín point out. They reference three major explanations in the standing literature for this coexistence. However, they find these perspectives inadequate because of their inability to explain important empirical realities and their failure to identify the conditions under which racism and liberalism coexist. In contrast, based on their research design and careful analysis, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín are able to convincingly show how and why "racial egalitarianism is especially fragile in

democratic and populist political structures" (p. 334).

I was very intellectually moved by this book. It provoked many questions, reflections, and musings. One issue concerned the authors' conceptualization of the terms "racism" and "anti-racism." The argument that FitzGerald and Cook-Martín put forth is premised on the equation of anti-racism with the elimination of racially selective criteria in immigration policy. Moreover, they interpret their findings about racialized immigration laws to make claims about "racism" and "anti-racism" more generally. However, this invites a question: how representative are racially restrictive immigration policies of other forms of racism? Can we use an analysis of racialized immigration policy to make broad claims about the relationship between liberalism and racism, for example? Some of FitzGerald and Cook-Martín's own findings suggest that racial discrimination in immigration policy is not necessarily illustrative of a country's racial ideology or its legal treatment of domestic racial minorities. For example, they show how in countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Cuba, national ideologies that emphasized racial inclusion within the national population comfortably coexisted with racially exclusive immigration laws. The authors interpret this coexistence as hypocrisy, but it may also indicate that people understand racially restrictive immigration policies and treatment of domestic groups in different ways. In other words, "racism" and "anti-racism" may mean something different when applied to foreigners versus nationals. If this is the case, racism towards foreigners and racism towards citizens should not be conceptually conflated, especially when the discussion involves societal norms which are, by definition, *emic* phenomena. On a related point, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín interpret the elimination of racially selective immigration policies as evidence of the establishment of an "anti-racist norm" across the region. However, as the authors themselves point out, the shift away from explicitly racist immigration policies did not always occur out of a commitment to anti-racism, but instead was a means to an end (e.g., to foster positive global

relationships and to bolster a country's international reputation). Given this, the degree to which such shifts can be characterized as "anti-racist" and conforming to an "anti-racist norm" is debatable and merits reflection.

Based on their analysis of race-specific immigration policies, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín make a rather dismal assertion regarding the relationship between liberalism and racism. They write, "When political institutions are structured such that public opinion can make its demands heard, the result is often bad for immigrants" (p. 19). One naturally wonders: where does this leave us? Are we to understand that the path to fair and inclusive immigration policy is the squelching of popular sentiment? If not, how are we to think about successful strategies for developing non-discriminatory immigration laws? Moreover, how do we reconcile the authors' assertion about the relationship between popular demands and racist or otherwise restrictive immigration policies with the existence of cases of significant progress for immigrants and/or domestic racial minorities in liberal democracies as a result of popular mobilization? These questions bring us back to the aforementioned issue of whether or not the relationship between racism and liberalism operates similarly or differently when the target group is immigrants versus natives.

On a final point, in the conclusion, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín assess the question: Could overt ethnic discrimination return? They conclude that the possibility is not likely. While I agree, I think a more interesting and relevant question is: In what ways may racialized immigration policies manifest in the future? This question better reflects findings from the sociological literature on race demonstrating how contemporary forms of racism, directed at nationals and foreigners alike, have increasingly manifested in covert, slippery, sophisticated, and seemingly race-neutral forms. In conclusion, even taking the aforementioned observations and questions into account, FitzGerald and Cook-Martín have clearly raised the bar for this kind of research. *Culling the Masses* is an exceptional piece of work that will undoubtedly inspire new and important intellectual conversations for generations to come.

 Why Southern History Matters

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With *Between Slavery and Capitalism*, Martin Ruef has produced a very important book that contributes significantly to our understanding of the monumental transformations that occurred in the southern United States after the Civil War. A great deal has been written by sociologists, economists, historians, and others about this region during this time period. Yet, few authors have been as successful as Ruef in getting the history, sociology, and economics of the subject "right." Before justifying my high opinion of Ruef's book, I need to do a bit of framing for the remainder of my essay.

In general, sociologists have neglected the South when attempting to trace the historical roots of modern American societal structures and social problems. I believe that this relative neglect can be traced back to the intellectual dominance, since at least the middle of the twentieth century, of the "Chicago School" of sociology over the school of southern regionalists that was centered primarily at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As a result, much more effort has been devoted to documenting the causes and consequences of the extreme racial residential segregation that developed in northern cities during the first three quarters of the twentieth century than to studying the causes and consequences of landlessness and economic marginalization among southern African Americans during the same time period. Indeed, I would speculate that the attention devoted by sociologists to the single city of Chicago far exceeds that given to the entire rural population of the former Confederate States. As evidence for this regional imbalance, consider that *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton has been cited nearly 2,000 times since it was published in 1945. In contrast, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Counties* by Arthur Raper has been cited fewer than 200 times since it first

Between Slavery and Capitalism: The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South, by **Martin Ruef**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014. 285 pp. \$35.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780691162775.

appeared in 1936. Not everyone will agree with this brash generalization, and that is fine. I am willing to stand by it.

There is peril in neglecting the American South as we seek to comprehend modern conditions in the United States. The South embraced legal racial segregation and prohibited racial intermarriage longer than other sections of the nation. The vast majority of legal executions have occurred in southern states since the practice was reintroduced in 1976. The greatest concentration of evangelical Christians is in the South. And the history and influence of Dixie is evident in today's political map of the United States. The sharp rightward shift of the Republican Party, beginning with Ronald Reagan, could not have been accomplished without a dependable southern base. In short, in order to fully understand contemporary American society, culture, and politics, it is important to know something about southern history.

When roughly four million southern slaves gained their freedom after the Civil War, many collateral changes were required in order for the region to adjust to the vast changes that accompanied emancipation. As Ruef carefully describes, institutions that existed to support a slave society were inappropriate for a society and economy based on free labor. How would a free workforce, composed of former bondsmen and women, be organized? How much corporal punishment of workers by employers would be tolerated? How much independence would be granted to the former slaves? How would the required supplies, materials,

and services required by the southern economy be provided and purchased? How would credit-worthiness be established and evaluated? How could the presumed racial inferiority of blacks, once so clearly signaled by their slave status, be maintained in a capitalist society based on free labor? How would economic development proceed? *Between Slavery and Capitalism* addresses all of these questions. And, as Ruef seeks answers, he emphasizes the uncertainty that accompanies profound institutional transitions like those experienced by the American South during the postbellum period.

Ruef describes three types of uncertainty that southern society faced as it transitioned from a slave economy to a capitalist economy. "Risk" involves decisions with an unknown outcome but for which the distribution of possible outcomes is known. "Classical uncertainty" exists when the distribution of possible outcomes is unknown but the possible outcomes, themselves, are classifiable. "Categorical uncertainty" is the most devilish of the three and, as Ruef observes, "From an institutional perspective, this source [i.e., categorical uncertainty] lies in circumstances of institutional flux and contention, not only where extant rules and social norms fail to provide expectations as to what outcomes are more or less likely, but also where *the categories of possible outcomes are themselves in the process of being redefined*" (p. 7, emphasis added).

Perhaps the most urgent and difficult adjustment required of the postbellum South, and one to which *Between Slavery and Capitalism* devotes considerable attention, was transitioning the southern agricultural economy from its dependence on slave labor to a reliance on free labor. This was an especially daunting adjustment because it was so tightly bound to the southern racial caste system. Of course, with the benefit of historical hindsight and the prior excellent work of scholars such as Roger Ransom and Richard Sutch (2000), we know that this dialectic ended in the rise of farm tenancy, especially sharecropping, and the infamous burden of debt peonage that would economically handicap southern blacks for decades.

Ruef engages this literature by viewing the "demise of the plantation" from the

perspective of the actors who were required to navigate such difficult social and economic terrain and to negotiate a solution that would result in a stable, if highly stratified, agricultural economy. He does this with a focus on the uncertainty that the actors faced as they confronted the challenge. How could the desire by white landowners to replace slaves with subservient and compliant wage laborers be satisfied while also giving freedmen and women the independence and opportunity they sought? What institutional arrangements would evolve to solve this apparent conundrum? By relying on the concept of uncertainty to investigate this fundamental socioeconomic transition, I consider *Between Slavery and Capitalism* to be the most significant contribution to the topic since Ransom and Sutch's classic treatment of the subject in *One Kind of Freedom*.

Ruef is equally successful in using institutional uncertainty to frame his analysis of the provision of credit and the execution of trade in the postbellum period. As he correctly notes, most prior research has focused primarily on the "upstream" consequences of this uncertainty: for example, the usurious interest rates charged by merchants and landlords for supplying tenant farmers and the trap of debt peonage that frequently resulted. *Between Slavery and Capitalism* reverses the analytical lens to consider the "downstream" uncertainty faced by suppliers and investors. For instance, Ruef asks, "In supplying fertilizer or other goods to country stores and their customers in the New South, how did wholesalers hope to manage risk and uncertainty? And why were they so often unsuccessful?" (p. 132).

Credit and trade in the postbellum South were destabilized by the disappearance of the not-so-invisible hand of "cotton factors" and the disruption, or destruction, of the traditional sources of credit and forms of mercantile transactions that prevailed during the era of slavery. According to Ruef, potential investors encountered substantial uncertainty as they assessed the credit-worthiness of local businesses and merchants in the postbellum South. What were their assets? How responsible was the proprietor? Indeed, given the paucity of local information, it was often difficult for investors even to discern the nature of local

businesses. What services did they provide? What items did they sell? Chapter Five of *Between Slavery and Capitalism* ("Credit and Trade in the New South") provides an insightful and fascinating discussion of how potential investors' use of the *R. G. Dun Reference Book* expanded during the postbellum period. The *Reference Book* offered a classification of, and general credit rating for, thousands of businesses throughout the United States. Without many good alternatives, wholesalers and investors grew to rely more heavily on the *Reference Book* to guide their business decisions. Yet, as Ruef notes, "At the end of the Radical Reconstruction, perhaps the most damning indictment of the 'hard' information provided in the *Reference Book* was its limited ability to predict the insolvency of proprietors to whom credit was provided" (p. 153). This uncertainty, in turn, represented a barrier to economic development in the South.

Ruef argues that southern economic development was also hindered when local communities experienced what he refers to as "idiosyncratic" organizational complexity. He describes a set of "norms of community structure" that defined a hierarchy of organizational types that were present in southern communities—farms, general stores, saloons, hotels, blacksmith shops, and theaters. These norms assumed an ordered introduction of these organizational types. As Ruef explains, "The rules took on mundane, yet familiar forms: the appearance of a physician in a county was expected to be followed closely by the appearance of a drug store to fill prescriptions; the appearance of a hotel was followed by the appearance of a bar or saloon to entertain out-of-town visitors" (p. 180). According to Ruef, conformity with these rules reduced uncertainty while deviation from them (i.e., "idiosyncratic communities") did the opposite. This is an intriguing possibility, but one that I cannot fully embrace until additional supporting empirical evidence is marshaled.

The challenges that southern society faced in trying to manage the uncertainties described in *Between Slavery and Capitalism* were formidable. And, as the history of the region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries clearly illuminates, it was not always successful. Sharp racial and

class lines defined social relations in the region. Delayed agricultural mechanization and industrial development retarded the economy. Educational expansion lagged. Drawing from the parallel histories of emancipation in other New World societies, Ruef identifies three mechanisms that might have made the American experience less harsh, had they existed: (1) gradual emancipation, (2) partial emancipation, and (3) compensated emancipation. Alas, the emancipation experienced by the American South was immediate, total, and without compensation to the freedmen and women or to their former owners. As a result, Dixie's journey between slavery and capitalism was harsh, contested, and violent.

Between Slavery and Capitalism contains much more than I can possibly describe given space constraints. The book's strengths are many, including the sophistication of the theoretical perspectives that motivate the study, the innovative use of somewhat obscure data sources such as slave narratives recorded by the Works Progress Administration and labor contracts recorded by the Freedmen's Bureau, and skillful analytic strategies that are applied to a wide variety of data. Its limitations are minor and do not at all detract from the book's scholarly impact. To bring this essay back to the framing discussion at the outset, I would have appreciated knowing Ruef's perceptions of the longer-term consequences of the South's difficult transition between slavery and capitalism—for the region and for the nation. For example, the evidence compiled and the conclusions drawn in *Between Slavery and Capitalism* position Ruef nicely to expand upon the work of the economist Jay R. Mandle (1978) in his insightful book *The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy after the Civil War*, which does take a long view. In fact, the subtitle of Ruef's book, *The Legacy of Emancipation in the American South*, led me to anticipate such a discussion. But this is truly a minor quibble about an excellent and important book.

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Out of Control: The French Police and the Rule of Law

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Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing is a disturbing yet riveting narrative that takes the reader deep into the daily routines, racial animosities, periodic violence, and moral reasoning of special policing squads operating on the outskirts of Paris in impoverished French *banlieues*. After three years of trying to gain access, anthropologist Didier Fassin, now a professor at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, spent roughly 15 months between 2005 and 2007 with anti-crime crews in an effort to provide a rounded account of the way disadvantaged residents—particularly adolescents and youngsters—of the so-called “sensitive urban areas” were treated by the police. The results are appalling but convincing.

Trotsky famously said, “there is but one international and that is the police.” Fassin brings this point home brilliantly, pointing out that from Watts to Brixton, from Chicago to Amsterdam, from London to [yes] Paris, virtually all major urban disturbances over the past fifty years have been marked by violent interactions between the police and ethnically or racially stigmatized residents who reside in disadvantaged neighborhoods. This, as the author carefully notes, is not to say the police are identical from place to place, but that the relations the police have with certain publics, the way the police are evaluated and disciplined (or not), and the accounts they themselves offer for their actions are, in fact, generalizable. This is a matter both asserted and demonstrated as Fassin makes excellent use of the ample (compared to France) ethnographic literature on the police in North America and Europe.

Enforcing Order: An Ethnography of Urban Policing, by **Didier Fassin**, translated by Rachel Gomme. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2013. 287 pp. \$24.95 paper. ISBN: 9780745664804.

More critically, perhaps, the police practices and justifications that are highlighted in this monograph appear to be on the rise in most western democracies. A small sample: the subtle shift from a concern with law enforcement (“preventive policing”) to enforcing order (“repressive policing”), true particularly in blighted urban areas and often rendered with excessive zeal; the growth of a paramilitary police whose equipment and methods resemble those used by the army, especially notable when heavily armored riot squads are brought in to maintain public order; the managerially-driven intensification for tracking police performance by use of quantitative measures that are at best loosely coupled to crime rates; the mounting social and cultural distance between the public and the police who typically work in places they do not know, understand, or much care about; the increasing use of anti-crime squads made up of self-selected, aggressive officers who often work in plain clothes but whose constant visible presence in particular neighborhoods is experienced by residents as oppressive; the spreading police distrust of the judicial system that justifies an extension on the ground of police discretion; and so on (and on). These accelerating trends—mostly out of sight to the general public—suggest that the police go about their

business in an increasingly autonomous fashion, above the law and, in many respects, out of control.

The evidence and arguments put forth in *Enforcing Order* are dense and multilayered. Fassin looks to explain police behavior in France in relation to the broad social demands for security made of the national police, to the highly bureaucratic and insulated state-run organization (i.e., “the Prince’s police not the people’s police”), to the right-turning, anti-immigrant, racist political climate in France, and to what he calls—and devotes considerable attention—the deeply entrenched “moral economy” that informs police work. Seven chapters of the book cover how police work is situated and ordinarily carried out (particularly in the *banlieues*), how police-public interactions, largely with minority and immigrant youth, often lead to violence, how institutional racism has arisen and is sustained politically at a national and organizational level, and how police officers at the local and ground levels routinely administer street justice according to their own—largely unquestioned—moral codes. These chapters are framed, up front, by a reflexive account of the author’s fieldwork and the inevitable complicity such work requires and, at the end, by his understanding of why such work is so critical and intimately related to an open, democratic state.

The writing throughout is direct, lively, and, sometimes, quite personal. Differing perspectives (and theories) are carefully attended to and sorted out. The wide-ranging episodes recounted are vivid and varied. A kind of no-nonsense and determined realism attends to the representations of witnessed police encounters and talk. This is indeed all too real, and a sense of drama—like most literary accounts of the police world—shapes much of the text. But the police world is, as Fassin makes perfectly clear, hardly all drama. A good deal of the work entails simply coping with the boredom that accompanies the job, even in anti-crime units. And comedy, too, helps us grasp the police world. Some of this is found in the dark humor and jokes of the police canteen, but much of the informative comedy Fassin suggests is unintentional—a call for help from a colleague who has somehow locked

himself in a toilet while on a house search, a police van responding to a call and careening dangerously through crowded city streets only to arrive at the wrong address, the inadvertent setting off of a burglar alarm during a security check, a police radio left on high volume and alerting suspects of the police presence. Nor is farce unknown: when an officer accidentally sprays tear gas on several of his mates, the unit panics and starts beating one another with their nightsticks, sending four of them to the hospital.

Standing behind such antics, however, is the recognition that routine police work is rather dull, marked only occasionally with dramatic flair. Calls for police assistance are relatively rare and therefore precious to the police and are likely to bring forth a sudden burst of often-misplaced energy. As a matter of form, the French police prefer the bellicose New Centurion model of the cop in the United States as a mythic ideal to the style of the restrained British bobby. Residents of the *banlieues* know this well and are reluctant to call on the police, for most are convinced that there are few situations that the police do not make worse by their mere presence. Whether comic or dramatic, however, Fassin effectively makes the point that police work in France has at most a limited effect on crime—a point well established in a variety of police studies conducted elsewhere.

The most common interactions the anti-crime squads have with the public are of the proactive stop-and-frisk variety, ostensibly for identification checks. These are the kinds of interactions that not only shame and degrade those stopped but on occasion (deftly parsed by Fassin) give rise to violence of a unilateral sort. Who is stopped or deemed suspicious by the police—young men of immigrant or minority status—arises from their physical characteristics or more accurately, as Fassin notes, from the prejudice attached to their physical characteristics. What is at work here is both malign intent on a given officer’s part and, more critically, the sense that a stop of these young men is most likely to bring results. The latter reason, Fassin makes clear, is an approved collective practice but unquestionably a not-so-subtle form of institutional racism

that is less identifiable, less overt than the former.

To close, *Enforcing Order* makes clear that practices an outsider might regard as deviant, if not illegal, are inscribed as proper in the moral economy of police work. Some officers, of course, manage to hold a less hostile ("them versus us") view of the world, and some are sparing in their use of force; however, the passive loyalty they display to their peers and to the organization keeps them from voicing their reservations, and a "get along, go along" work ethic rules the day. The message Fassin brings the reader is unambiguous: the broader prerogatives given the police in France in the past decade and the aggressive forms

of patrol work now undertaken by the anti-crime squads aggravate the very problems they are supposed to solve. What might be done to do away with such practices, given the blinkered complicity of high police officials, the courts, and the politicians, is a question Didier Fassin brings to light but, alas, cannot answer. Nor can we. But this is not a work dedicated to repairing, reforming, or dismantling the police force (although a sense of outrage lies beneath the surface), but an eye-wide-open view of the organization itself and why it operates as it does. Written as a public anthropology piece to inform readers of the politics of law and order in France, the work is stunning.