

based on self-reports of tolerance. Also, these forums were likely taking place in relatively homogenous groups, given residential segregation (even given the authors' argument that many participants did not know one another), leaving the level of tolerance in the more demanding case of heterogeneous face-to-face deliberative forums an open question.

The authors also argue that the talk in face-to-face forums lives up to another democratic standard: that it is informed. They make this argument based on the fact that large numbers of their respondents who participated in these events reported that they were sent briefing materials ahead of time, and had the opportunity to learn from neutral experts during their forum. However, the study does not directly test knowledge gains, and so it is difficult to tell just how well the availability of information via the forum actually leads to learning.

In general, the evidence that deliberative democracy is alive and well across the country and that people typically have positive experiences with it is hard to deny. Also, the survey of organizations conducting deliberative forums provides yet more evidence of the democratic merits of this talk. The organizers' responses suggest that the forums are grassroots, arising from community needs, and, perhaps most importantly, are premised on the radical idea that, yes, citizens can govern themselves.

One may ask: Who is it that is doing this governing, however? Are there not huge selection effects, leaving out the already politically marginalized, as deliberative naysayers would suggest? The authors argue to the contrary. Yes, the better educated are more likely to participate in discursive participation, and high socioeconomic status (SES) boosts organizational membership, which in turn increases an individual's likelihood of participating in discursive participation. However, SES appears to exert a weaker influence on discursive participation than on other forms of participation. In other words, if anything, discursive participation seems to open up democracy to a broader array of participants, rather than restrict it.

Part of the value of this book is its attempt to analyze the effects of forum participation. Although the data are cross-sectional, the authors use two-stage least squares to examine effects, and they find that participating in organized deliberation leads to further participation among one-third of forum participants. They also observe a positive effect on "political capital," a large index that includes political efficacy, trust, knowledge, and attention, as well as ideological strength, partisan strength, and political tolerance. Remarkably, they find that forum participation has a stronger effect on this political capital than income, and almost as strong an effect as education.

Taken together, these results present a positive and hopeful map of discursive participation. But how can this be? Did we not learn from John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (*Stealth Democracy*, 2002) that people simply do

not want to be involved in governance, and that they do not want to be involved because they abhor the procedures of democratic government? We will have to wait to find out, because much of the discursive participation examined by Jacobs, Lomax Cook, and Delli Carpini is not directly related to governance. That is, very little of the decision making occurring in these face-to-face forums had binding implications for policy decisions. There is a lot of discursive democracy going on out there, but so far, it has not been widely used as a procedure of governance.

The positive experience with deliberation that the respondents to the *Talking Together* study report, however, and the sizable portion of the population that has participated in face-to-face forums do pose a challenge to the pessimistic picture presented in *Stealth Democracy*. It is possible that if these forums do become more frequently connected to policymaking, a larger portion of the population will see them as a viable alternative form of democratic government, which they may find more appealing than politics as usual.

The Politics of Income Inequality in the United States.

By Nathan J. Kelly. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 216p. \$75.00.

Class War? What Americans Really Think about Economic Inequality.

By Benjamin I. Page and Lawrence R. Jacobs. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 160p. \$39.00 cloth, \$13.00 paper.

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— Lane Kenworthy, *University of Arizona*

Here is a standard model of the link between public opinion and income inequality in the United States: concern about inequality (public opinion) → Democratic president → redistribution → reduction in income inequality.

An equally commonplace notion is that Americans do not care much about income inequality. Few Americans have any idea how much inequality there is, according to this view, and those that do are not especially bothered if they perceive inequality to be high or increasing. These two books tell a different story. In *Class War? What Americans Really Think about Economic Inequality*, Benjamin Page and Lawrence Jacobs find that Americans do object to high inequality. But this does not prompt them to want government to boost redistribution; instead, Americans want government to increase policies that improve economic opportunity. In *The Politics of Income Inequality in the United States*, Nathan Kelly finds that this is exactly what Democratic presidents tend to do. They move policy to the left, but they do so largely via programs that enhance opportunity, and those programs have the effect of reducing market income inequality. This, much more than redistribution, is what results in less inequality under Democratic presidents than under

Republican ones. Both books are valuable, worth reading and grappling with.

Page and Jacobs focus on Americans' attitudes toward inequality and government policy. Although they draw on existing public opinion survey data, mainly they report the findings of a new survey conducted for them in the summer of 2007 (prior to the recession). They find that "most Americans are aware of high and increasing economic inequality. Most are unhappy about it. Most favor a wide range of concrete, pragmatic government programs when their well-being is threatened or opportunity is blocked by forces beyond their control. Most are willing to pay taxes to foot the bill" (pp. x–xi).

What programs do Americans favor? Mainly ones that expand economic opportunity, rather than ones that directly redistribute income or wealth from the rich to the poor. At the center of this is education, but Page and Jacobs also find strong support for government assistance with jobs, wages, health care, income security in retirement, and an income floor for those unable to work. Americans, they conclude, are "conservative egalitarians." They do not like economic inequality and they favor government action to address it, but the government response they prefer is one that expands economic opportunity and assures economic security.

Page and Jacobs's findings are broadly consistent with those of several other studies of American attitudes toward economic inequality and government activism (Jennifer Hochschild, *What's Fair?*, 1981; James R. Kleugel and Eliot R. Smith, *Beliefs About Inequality*, 1986; Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, 1999; Leslie McCall and Lane Kenworthy, "Americans' Social Policy Preferences in the Era of Rising Inequality," *Perspectives on Politics* 7 [September 2009]: 459–484). *Class War?* is the most concise and readable summary statement available. It is ideal for use in undergraduate teaching. Moreover, Page and Jacobs' survey suggests an interesting fact not emphasized in previous studies: These patterns hold across income groups and among both Democrats and Republicans—not evenly, but with more muted differences than we might expect: "Majorities of all economic and political stripes actually agree that economic inequality has widened, that this is worrisome, and that the government should respond. . . Instead of class [and partisan] war, the evidence shows a high degree of positive, constructive agreement on what should be done" (p. 14).

For me, the only noteworthy shortcoming of *Class War?* is that Page and Jacobs do little in their survey to probe Americans' views about the peculiarly top-heavy nature of the rise in U.S. income inequality. This is understandable, as data revealing this have become available relatively recently. Still, I hope that future surveys on attitudes toward income inequality and what to do about it address this shortcoming head-on. Does it matter to people that rising income inequality consists mainly of a

growing separation between the top 1% and everyone else? How, if at all, does this affect their preferences for government action?

In *The Politics of Income Inequality*, Kelly attempts to synthesize and extend macro politics and power resources theories, and to assess their effectiveness in explaining developments in income inequality in the United States from 1947 to 2000. Macro politics theory asserts that aggregate public opinion is a key determinant of government policies. Power resources theory contends that labor strength and left parties influence government redistribution and, hence, income inequality. Kelly says that macro politics theory is deficient in not going further to see if policy has a noteworthy impact on socioeconomic outcomes, such as inequality. Power resources theory, he suggests, has underemphasized the potential impact of left government on nonredistributive policies that may influence the market (pretransfer–pretax) distribution of income. And its exponents, too, have largely sidestepped empirical investigation of the effect of policies on inequality outcomes.

Kelly's empirical analyses suggest that Democratic presidents and policy liberalism (an aggregate measure created by James Stimson) reduce market inequality and increase redistribution. His novel finding is that a president's party and policy liberalism have stronger effects on market inequality than on redistribution. Thus, unlike in at least some other rich nations, in the United States the impact of power resources and partisanship on income inequality appears to work chiefly through the market distribution of income, rather than through government redistributive efforts.

This conclusion is similar to one reached recently by Larry Bartels in his book *Unequal Democracy* (2008). For Bartels, the key policy is macroeconomic (fiscal and monetary). Democratic presidents have tended to pursue economic growth and low unemployment, whereas Republican presidents tend to worry more about keeping inflation in check. This has produced faster income growth in the lower parts of the income distribution, and, hence, less income inequality, under Democratic presidents than under Republican ones. Kelly's policy liberalism measure does not include macroeconomic policy, yet he, too, finds a strong effect of a president's party on pregovernment inequality.

Is this correct? Has the president's party been a key determinant of market income inequality in the United States? This certainly seems plausible, but I have several worries. First, Kelly's finding applies to the period from 1947 to 2000 as a whole. My own analyses suggest that the impact of a president's party on income inequality has shrunk considerably or perhaps even disappeared since the 1970s (Lane Kenworthy, "How Much Do Presidents Influence Income Inequality?" in *Challenge*, March/April 2010). These two conclusions are not necessarily incompatible, but they have different implications for the continued relevance of the theory.

Second, there are questions about the data and measures. For his empirical analyses, Kelly needs data on the market distribution of income and government redistribution. The Census Bureau has such data, but only beginning in 1979. Kelly, therefore, imputes market income inequality and redistribution, with the distribution of the total quantity of taxes and transfers across income quintiles assumed to remain constant over time. This procedure is defensible but potentially problematic for earlier decades. For recent decades, a concern about the author's inequality measure is that it does not capture the sharp rise of incomes among the top 1%. According to his measure, pregovernment income inequality decreased during the Clinton administration in the 1990s, but data that include the top 1% suggest that inequality soared during these years.

Third, I want to know more about the causal mechanisms. In what ways does policy liberalism help to reduce pretransfer-pretax income inequality? Kelly suggests that it occurs through "market conditioning," which refers to any type of influence of any government policy on the behavior of economic actors. He mentions tax incentives, education, and regulation of business as examples. Other possibilities include the minimum wage and rules governing union organizing. Which market conditioning policies were enacted or altered by which Democratic presidents, with what effects? In Kelly's view, this is unimportant: "The theory of distributional outcomes that I have outlined argues that nearly every governmental policy either redistributes incomes or conditions markets. I am agnostic about which micro policies actually generate different distributional outcomes via the market conditioning mechanism" (p. 127). I would prefer the black box to be opened up.

These two books contribute usefully to ongoing research on the politics of income inequality in rich countries. As I suggested earlier, together they offer a compelling story about the relationship among public opinion, presidents, government policy, and income inequality. It is a story that challenges conventional thinking among many scholars, journalists, pundits, and policymakers. And it offers fertile ground for further tilling.

Democracy Is a Good Thing: Essays on Politics, Society, and Culture in Contemporary China.

By Yu Keping. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2008.
240p. \$34.95.
doi:10.1017/S1537592710001489

— Daniel A. Bell, *Tsinghua University*

Countries around the world have long imported European and American scholarship, but the flow in the other direction has been uneven. This is particularly evident in the case of China. Although China's rapid economic growth and emergence as a world power has attracted an enor-

mous amount of attention in the West, very little work by Chinese scholars themselves has become influential outside China. Perhaps the main reason is that Chinese work is rarely translated into European languages; by contrast, the works of Western scholars are frequently translated into Chinese. The result is that we often fail to understand China on its own terms and miss a vital chance for cross-pollination.

Fortunately, things are beginning to change for the better. Three translation series from Chinese to English have been launched of late. Brill's Humanities in China Library, edited by Zhang Longxi and Axel Schneider, aims to translate important works of Chinese scholarship in the humanities. The first book in that series, *Tradition and Modernity: A Humanist View*, by Chen Lai, perhaps China's most prominent scholar of Chinese philosophy, was published in 2009. The Princeton-China Series (disclosure: I am an editor) will soon be launched, and the first book in that series—*Ancient Chinese Thought and Modern Chinese Power* by Yan Xuetong, China's most influential foreign policy analyst—will be published early next year.

A third series, The Thornton Center Chinese Thinkers, was launched in 2009. The first book in that series is the book under review, *Democracy Is a Good Thing*. Yu Keping is an adviser to Chinese President Hu Jintao and one of China's most prominent political scientists. In 2006, the *Beijing Daily* published a three-page essay by Yu, entitled "Democracy Is a Good Thing," that created a big splash in intellectual and perhaps policy circles in China. Today, the phrase "Democracy Is a Good Thing" is as well known in China as Francis Fukuyama's phrase "The End of History" in Western countries. This book leads off with Yu's famous essay and includes 12 others, along with an excellent introduction by Cheng Li and a foreword by John L. Thornton, for whom this series is named.

The book is divided into four sections: political development in reform-era China; social transformation and civil society; culture, modernity, and sustainability; and globalization and governance. The essays address diverse topics and do not form a coherent whole. With one or two exceptions, they are relatively brief and addressed to a broad audience rather than to academics. The main interest of the book is political rather than scholarly: To what extent do Chinese leaders favor political reform, and what exactly do they have in mind? Yu is perhaps best placed to discuss such matters, and The Thornton Center should be commended for bringing his views to an Anglophone audience.

So what exactly does Yu say about democratic development in China? Unfortunately, only two essays—Chapters 1 and 3—really delve into that question. Yu is a political reformer in the Chinese context, though he is careful to couch his views in ways that would be politically acceptable to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). There is no discussion of political dissidents, no critique