

work given its limited supply. Indeed, it is likely that significant portions of the remaining articles in the elite journals depend indirectly on NSF-supported theory, data, or methods. That CGP do not recognize this is testimony to inherent flaws in their research design.

A simple “mind experiment” can reinforce these points. Consider, for example, how differently the major journals would look without NSF support for political science, direct and indirect. No doubt we would have just as many journals publishing just as many articles. Certainly all of the elite journals would still be filled with research and still would be publishing the (relatively) best work produced by the discipline. But does this mean (as CGP imply) that the quality of research in the profession would be just as good as it is today without NSF support? To the contrary, we believe, the political science landscape would be dismal. Many of our richest databases would be either non-existent or severely limited in scope and duration. Our methods and theories would lag substantially behind where they are today. Moreover, to the extent that economics and sociology were funded by NSF but political science was

not, we would expect that research in political science would be even more dominated by the theories and methods of other disciplines than already is the case.

In summary, Canon, Gabel, and Patton are wrong in claiming that there is bias in NSF funding and wrong in shortchanging the importance of NSF funding to the advancement of political science research. The National Science Foundation has one of the most fair, rigorous, and transparent peer review systems in all of academe. NSF Program Officers work hard at community outreach in order to maximize the number, quality, and diversity of proposal submissions, consistent with NSF’s legislative mandate. Its reviewers and panelists are carefully vetted for conflicts of interests and strongly encouraged to fund the best research regardless of other considerations. As a result, NSF has made major contributions, both direct and indirect, to the development of political science over the past three decades. NSF-funded research has significantly enriched both our theories and methods. It has increased and strengthened the human capital in our discipline by virtue of its heavy investment in

graduate student research and training and its strong support of young investigators; and NSF has contributed greatly to the infrastructure of our discipline by virtue of its substantial investments in both equipment and data. It is no wonder that NSF-supported research is consistently published in the leading outlets, including the most prestigious journals. The Political Science Program at NSF is a valuable asset to the discipline. It welcomes scientifically rigorous research proposals from a variety of perspectives and in all sub fields. This was the case in the early 1990s when we participated in the Program’s management and we are certain that it remains the case today. To assert the contrary without any semblance of meaningful data is irresponsible.

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## A Response to Campbell and Mishler

Wow! What an indictment! We are charged with impugning the good faith of NSF’s program officers and reviewers, raising the canard that some kind of “old boys” network controls the funding decisions, and saying that the quality of political science research would be just as good today if there were no NSF funding. (And this would let the dreaded economists and sociologists take over our beloved discipline.) Indeed, we are even accused of putting the future of NSF’s political science program’s funding in jeopardy. If we had actually written or implied all the evils that Campbell and Mishler attribute to us, we, too, would sign on to their letter. But we do no such thing.

Basically, Campbell and Mishler level two charges against us that we dispute: (1) they claim that we imply that external funding, particularly from NSF, is irrelevant to political science research and (2) they claim that we say that

NSF is biased (in the perjorative sense) in how it funds research in political science. We neither intended to write nor actually wrote an article addressing these points and we do not make any such statements or arguments.

First, Campbell and Mishler somehow believe that we wrote an analysis of NSF and that we have “shortchanged” the importance of its contributions. Indeed, they talk about how our research design for such an analysis is “flawed.” But the hard fact is that we were not analyzing NSF’s importance to research in political science. We wrote an article about how much external funding directly contributed to research reported in the discipline’s leading journals. Because NSF is the single most important source, we paid particular attention to it. But we emphatically did not say, nor do we believe, that if NSF had no political science program, the scope and quality of political science research

would be about the same. Let us be explicit: we consider NSF a most valuable institution for the advancement of political science.

However, we know of deans, etc. (particularly ones with a hard science background), who believe that receipt of a grant is the *sine qua non* of meaningful research. We set out to dispel this belief. Given the scarcity of external funding resources in political science, we think it is extremely important to note that plenty of good research is conducted in spite of the limited resources. Some administrators, perhaps naively or strategically, focus largely on the level of external funding to compare and evaluate the quality of research across departments; this seems like an important point to demonstrate empirically.

Second, as for the issue of bias in NSF funding across subfields and approaches, we acknowledge again (as

we did at some length in the article) that there are different ways to interpret our data and that we cannot say much concretely about the selection of research to support by NSF. We still believe we can use our data to say something about the relative frequency with which published research in different areas acknowledges NSF funding. This type of bias (in the statistical sense) is fairly clear from the data. We suspect that many journal readers in the discipline more or less knew these general patterns well before our article appeared. Nowhere, however, did we impugn the integrity of the program of officers or reviewers. (Indeed, two of us have received NSF awards.) We did not charge or even hint that an insider clique exists or awards most of the grants to itself.

We realize that much energy and emotion within the discipline is devoted to sometimes careless characterizations of NSF and the value of research it supports. Most of these are not found in print, but are bandied about in emails or

in the corridors of political science meetings. Because we are in print, we are fearful that Campbell and Mishler use our article as a vehicle for answering such critics. Thus, they twist around or add to what we say to suit their anger at others.

Given this climate, we apologize if, in spite of our explicit statements regarding the limitations of our data, readers leave with the impression that our data showed a clear bias by NSF in favor of one sub-field or approach over others in its funding decisions. They do not.

Regardless, Campbell and Mishler are careless in commenting on our article. At one point they claim our conclusion that "valuable research in political science does not require much if any funding" is "flawed," "nonsensical," and "so astounding as to be embarrassing." A few paragraphs later they say "None of this is to deny that important work can and is done in political science without funding." Will the real Campbell and Mishler please stand up!

The bulk of Campbell and Mishler's letter is irrelevant to our article. For example, they write at considerable length about NSF's contribution to building databanks and developing methodological tools that advance political science well beyond publications by particular grantees. This is certainly true and usefully reiterated from time to time. However, we never said or implied anything to the contrary; we did not examine NSF's role in advancing the quality and quantity of political science research. They also argue that NSF-supported publications are about as numerous as can be reasonably expected. This may or may not be so; we offered no commentary or implications about this.

We wish that Campbell and Mishler had written about our article instead of using it as an excuse to lash out at NSF's real critics.

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