

Chambers finds a different historical path in Cleveland, but one that also supports the conclusion that race has played an important role in education reform. Cleveland experimented with decentralization, this time based on the efforts of a powerful mayor (pp. 70–72). The decentralization attempt was hampered, and eventually reversed, due largely to a series of fiscal crises in the public school system that a decentralized system was poorly adapted to solve (pp. 75–76). Throughout this period, the mayor sought to engage the community through a series of popular education summits (pp. 70–74). Race influenced this process through its consistent impact on the mayoral and bond elections (p. 82). The end result of the process was a centralized system, much like that in Chicago, but a broadly popular system that stood up to the scrutiny of a direct vote of the citizens in 2002 (pp. 85–86). Chambers argues that the principle source of variation between Cleveland and Chicago was the history of citizen engagement by Cleveland's mayor.

These fascinating comparative histories of urban education reform are hampered by their lack of analysis of important processes happening outside the city limits. For example, the grant of control over the education system to the mayor of Cleveland came from the Ohio state legislature (p. 78). Chambers offers little discussion of how the local politics of Cleveland was, or was not, reflected in the state legislature. Acknowledgment of the connections between local and state politics would have enhanced her case studies.

In *School's In*, Paul Manna engages the issue of connectivity in his study of national education reform and the influence of state politics on change in national policy. Manna builds a theory of "borrowing strength" (p. 5) to explain how policy entrepreneurs utilize the connections between state and federal institutions to bolster the position of their policy proposals. Policy entrepreneurs require two components to force their proposals onto policy agendas: justification and capabilities. A level of government (federal or state) will only pursue a policy option if it has the justification to act in a policy area and the capability to carry out the policy. Manna illustrates how policy entrepreneurs use the connections between state and federal institutions to borrow justifications or capabilities from each other. A policy option that lacks a justification at the federal level can borrow that justification from state-level actors through a policy proposal that borrows states' interests in the plan. This borrowing can occur in either direction (federal borrowing state capacities or states borrowing national capacities, for example), thus defying simple top-down or bottom-up models of policy change.

Manna uses the development of federal education policy over the past half century to illustrate the process of borrowing strength. The episode to which he rightly pays the most attention is the recent No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (pp. 117–36). He notes that the federal government did not possess the capability to restructure public educa-

tion. While there was justification for federal education policymaking dating back to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the federal government still had little structural capacity to influence educational practices in the various Kindergarten–12 campuses across the country. The only way to generate the support needed to pass the sweeping legislation was to borrow strength—in this case, capacity—from the state education institutions themselves. No Child Left Behind then relies on federal fiscal and regulatory capacities built over previous decades, while drawing on state education organizations to carry out key tasks like designing and implementing standardized testing. In what may be the most interesting part of the author's account of federal education policy, he recounts how the state capacity in education was itself the product of borrowing strength from federal education initiatives in the past. The interactivity of state and federal capacity strongly supports his central claim that the evolution of policy change cannot be accounted for in simple top-down or bottom-up models. Instead, our understanding of policy change must incorporate explanations for how different levels of government rely on and reinforce each other as policy entrepreneurs shop for venues receptive to their arguments.

The chief limitation of *School's In* is also one of its strengths. It is a short study that leaves many questions unanswered. What distinguishes successful attempts at borrowing strength from unsuccessful attempts? What induces political institutions to invest in borrowing strength, rather than in developing their own capacities? The book presents a coherent and appealing theory of interinstitutional dynamics, but only scratches the surface of the questions raised. The model begs for further development of the microdynamics of policy entrepreneurs that can explain the use of borrowing-strength strategies and the incorporation of interstate cooperation and state–local interactions (like that discussed in Chambers's *Mayors and Schools*).

Together these books represent a promising trend. Both authors have looked to the states and localities and found political processes often ignored in the discipline's focus on national-level politics. The survey of state and local politics represented in just these two volumes suggests that much of what we think to be true, based on our understanding of national-level politics, may be of limited use in understanding local and state politics. The compound nature of our constitution can only be ignored at the peril of policy researchers.

#### **After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School**

**Desegregation.** By Charles T. Clotfelter. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006. 216p. \$55.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper. DOI: 10.1017/S1537592707070338

— Kevin J. McMahon, *Trinity College*

Those who live or have lived in metropolitan areas that faced court-ordered desegregation of the schools in the

latter part of the twentieth century have likely heard a common theory about the connection of those efforts to the state of the relevant city. It goes something like this: Once federal courts ordered city schools to desegregate, many white city dwellers either fled to the suburbs for protection or plucked their kids from city schools and enrolled them in private ones. Under the first scenario, the end of neighborhood schools negatively affected the city, as families in once-vital neighborhoods abandoned desegregating city schools they perceived as problematic for their children's education for virtually lily-white suburban schools thought to be of a higher quality. Under the second scenario, white parents remained in the city of their birth but undermined desegregation efforts by transferring their children to private schools (which were mostly Catholic in the Northeast and Midwest and mostly newly opened in the South). In the end, long-frustrated federal judges and civil rights leaders ultimately succeeded in increasing the levels of interaction between white and black children, but their efforts had significant side effects for those cities as well.

As many know, the story is far more complicated than this commonly told tale, and Charles T. Clotfelter admirably seeks to separate fact from fiction in his sharp analysis of desegregation efforts after the Supreme Court's 1954 decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*. (Although Clotfelter's focus is on desegregation itself, rather than the connection between desegregation and the state of the nation's cities, his insights are informative for such a discussion as well.) After his introduction and a useful first chapter recounting the history of segregation and desegregation in the schools, he moves to the heart of his analysis. In his second chapter, he assesses the effect of *Brown* on segregation and interracial contact, employing new tools for understanding changes in the makeup of America's schools. His next chapter considers the importance of "white flight" to the suburbs, providing evidence to support "the white avoidance hypothesis," namely, "that whites prefer to avoid racially mixed schools" (p. 91). Chapter 4 examines the flight to private schools, substantiating claims that these institutions at times served as a "vehicle of escape" (p. 103) for white students, but also "casting doubt on a simplistic racial motive for private school enrollment" (p. 114). One interesting side note in this chapter is Clotfelter's observation that progressive causes sometimes clashed in the schools and, in turn, disturbed desegregation efforts. As he explains, part of the reason that religious parents may have decided against public education for their children is because the American Civil Liberties Union succeeded in removing prayer from the schools, leaving private schools to fill that spiritual void.

In Chapter 5, Clotfelter focuses on the insides of desegregated schools, allowing him to most fully display the importance of his central focus: interracial contact. In doing so, he notes that school officials—most typi-

cally through "some form of academic tracking, by which classes of the same subject are differentiated by academic level"—have limited such contact. As he writes: "The evidence suggests that this bias results at least in part from the efforts by administrators to accommodate the wishes of middle-class parents . . . hoping to keep [their] children . . . from leaving their public schools" (pp. 145–46). The story is quite similar with regard to extracurricular activities. In his final two chapters, the author first examines desegregation in higher education and then attempts to answer the "so what" question. In this final chapter, he notes that while interracial contact has increased significantly since the pre-*Brown* years, the gains "were smaller than they might have otherwise been" (p. 181).

Politics is not central to Clotfelter's story, and this is both the strength and the weakness of the book. It is a strong point because Clotfelter cuts to the chase, telling us in report-like fashion what most mattered when and where and backing up his conclusions with the best available statistical support. On the other hand, he overlooks aspects of desegregation efforts that some readers may find surprising. For example, public law scholars might expect Clotfelter to engage Gerald Rosenberg's argument from *The Hollow Hope* (1991), where he suggests that courts are not properly equipped to produce social change alone. But Clotfelter does not even cite Rosenberg's book. This is unfortunate because Clotfelter clearly places courts at the center of school desegregation, and further exploration of the political driving force behind these efforts would have been a useful addition to his analysis. For example, as he writes with regard to the desegregation retreat: "The year 1974 was surely a turning point in the federal government's stance on the policy of school desegregation, because in that year the Supreme Court issued the first of a series of decisions that would effectively put the brakes on government efforts to desegregate schools" (p. 30). He then points to Richard Nixon's thinking in selecting one of his four justices who would join the 1974 *Milliken v. Bradley* majority—the decision that virtually banned interdistrict solutions for integrating de facto segregated schools. Few would doubt that Nixon was pleased with *Milliken*, but his role and that of his administration in desegregation efforts were more involved than Clotfelter implies. Indeed, as historian Dean Kotlowski suggests in his book *Nixon's Civil Rights*, it might even be argued that the efforts of Nixon's administration made him "the greatest school desegregator in American history" (2001, 37). The point here is not that Clotfelter should have viewed Nixon in such a light, but rather, in my reading of his account, that courts appear to get both too much credit and too much blame for the "rise and retreat" of school desegregation. This tendency, in turn, prevents the author from fully exploring the political factors that frustrated desegregation (and consequently affected the nation's metropolitan areas).

These points aside, *After Brown* is an extremely valuable book. Charles Clotfelter has done yeoman's work in providing his readers with the best evidence to date on a subject that continues to attract a great deal of national attention. In turn, it should be read by all those interested in understanding the true state of desegregation and the role of interracial contact in the education of America's children.

**To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of**

**Allegiance.** By Richard J. Ellis. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005. 312p. \$29.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper.  
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— Kevin Mattson, *Ohio University*

This is an intelligent book about the strange story of American patriotism. Strange because America is much more of an “imagined community,” to use Benedict Anderson's evocative concept, than most Western European states. Also strange because, as Richard Ellis points out, it has been so contested over the years.

Ellis's book will no doubt annoy political scientists who search for models, airtight theories, or a quantifiable subject matter. We have here no obsession with “methods,” just straightforward historical narrative. This makes the book not only enjoyable to read but also appealing for use in undergraduate courses dealing with American patriotism and nationalism.

Ellis refuses to tell a simple, unified narrative about how the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag was adopted. A straightforward or Whiggish story is impossible due in part to the “decentralized character of American education,” wherein different schools and municipal and state governments could adopt the pledge and its rules (how to hold your hand, the need to stand, etc.) in different ways (p. 58).

The book is strongest in its opening sections. Here, Ellis explores the story of Francis Bellamy, the original author of the Pledge. It is fascinating to note that Bellamy (a cousin of Edward Bellamy, radical author of *Looking Backward*) was a Christian socialist and concerned with the selfish materialism and business culture taking root during the Gilded Age at the turn of the last century. Though Ellis admits that Bellamy was “undeniably radical” (p. 26), he downplays this element of his life and instead stresses his nativist streak. It was Bellamy's fear of new people coming ashore to America that drove him to write the Pledge and then try to get it adopted nationwide. The biggest aid in his campaign came during World War I, a time known for whipped-up nativism (anti-German most obviously) and patriotism.

The author is quick to document early dissent from the Pledge. Most of this came from religious believers, especially Mennonites and Jehovah's Witnesses, who no doubt worried that the Pledge deified the flag and nation more

than it did God (and “under God” was not in the original version). The conflicts documented in this story are fascinating and sometimes comical. For instance, during World War II, there was some concern that the original arm-extended salute to the flag looked frighteningly like the Heil Hitler salute in Nazi Germany (p. 115). Never was it an easy thing to get American patriotism right!

Ellis's story turns particularly contentious as it moves up in time. As the saying goes, the 1960s changed everything, and it certainly changed the way Americans thought about the Pledge. More secular claims started to be made against the Pledge, with some students saying that it was impossible for them to state that America really stood for “justice” (pp. 160–61). Judges increasingly allowed students to sit and remain silent during the Pledge. Teachers, too, got in on the act of refusing to comply. Battles emerged between legislatures—typically in support of the pledge—and the judiciary—which was more willing to accept the importance of dissent, and religious dissent especially (p. 168). Ellis then shows how this story culminated in the Dukakis-Bush Sr. battle for the presidency, when Vice President George H. W. Bush thrashed Governor Michael Dukakis for refusing to sign a pro-Pledge bit of legislation.

Toward the end of the book, the story turns less illuminating as it turns fairly obvious. After all, it is no surprise to find that the Pledge became a political football after 9/11. Republicans turned increasingly strident, and more willing to make patriotism work for them as the culture wars heated up. Ellis shows how “politicians” have used the Pledge and mandatory laws to “mobilize political support and to portray opponents as insufficiently patriotic” (p. 207).

The idea that stating certain words could make clear one's loyalty is indeed a strange practice. It is also exceptional, as Ellis points out. He cannot find any other country that does what the United States does with its pledge. He argues that America's “idea-based identity” (p. 214) cannot explain it. He also knocks down the idea that America's self-conception as a chosen people has much to offer in way of explanation. He emphasizes instead a national “anxiety” that is prone to abuse. And he has much documentary evidence to show that.

Still, “anxiety” might sound like something bad—something prone to manipulation. But it might also offer us another interpretation. Ellis himself documents how a fear of “materialism” has inspired Americans to seek a faith in something that transcends self-interest. Recall Bellamy here. And though he downplays this dimension and emphasizes fear, it is important to recall the idealist strain behind the Pledge. After all, the idea is not necessarily that Americans *are* unified and not divided—it is that Americans *should be* united even across class lines. Though saying words does not ensure that America will achieve more social justice, the spirit behind saying those words might matter more than Ellis himself thinks.