

good produces a higher monetary return than is the case for others in the group. The main finding is that reward opportunities strongly increase group contributions in such groups while punishment opportunities do not. Reward also mitigates contribution decay over successive periods and improves social welfare.

Chapter 2 mainly studies how rank incentives (i.e., relative performance information) in a milestone-based online assignment system affect students' academic performance. I find that rank incentives increase the likelihood of a student putting more effort in the online assignment. Rank incentives also have positive effects on low-performing students' exam marks while they have negative effects on high-performing students' exam marks. The positive effects seem driven by increased self-perceived stress, increased effort, and decreased procrastination. The negative effects seem driven by increased self-perceived happiness and reallocation of effort.

Chapter 3 studies how rank incentives and milestone information (i.e., information with reference to achievement milestones corresponding to different amounts of points earned) affect men's and women's academic performance differently. Women with access to the rank incentives experience a 0.19 standard deviations decrease of marks in the first midterm, compared to women without this access. In the absence of relative performance information, men with access to the milestone information experience a 0.26 standard deviations increase of marks in the final exam, compared to men without the access. The negative effects on women seem driven by their increased stress level, whereas men's improved exam performance seems driven by increased effort.

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## “Black America Cares:” The response of African Americans to the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–1970

James Farquharson

Abstract of a thesis for a Doctorate of Philosophy submitted to the Australian Catholic University, Sydney

Far from having only marginal significance and generating a “subdued” response among African Americans, as some historians have argued, the Nige-

rian Civil War (1967–1970) collided at full velocity with the conflicting discourses and ideas by which black Americans sought to understand their place in the United States

and the world in the late 1960s. Black liberal civil rights leaders leapt to offer their service as agents of direct diplomacy during the conflict, seeking to preserve Nigerian unity; grassroots activists from New York to Kansas organised food-drives, concerts and awareness campaigns in support of humanitarian aid for Biafran victims of starvation; while other pro-Biafran black activists warned of links between black “genocide” in Biafra and the US alike. This thesis is the first to recover and analyse at length the extent, complexity and character of such African American responses to the Nigerian Civil War. Drawing on extensive use of private papers, activist literature, government records and especially the black press, it charts the way African Americans conceptualised, over time and in complex ways, their varied understandings of issues such as black internationalist solidarities, territorial sovereignty and political viability, humanitarian compassion and great power *realpolitik*, as well as colonial and neo-colonial influence in Africa.

The thesis initially explores the longer twentieth-century history of African American engagement with Nigeria by way

of establishing context, before providing in-depth analysis of the key initiatives and events that comprised African American engagement with the civil war. Chapters move chronologically and thematically to discuss direct diplomatic efforts to broker peace, African American responses to alleged genocide in Biafra, the rise and fall of pro-Biafran political support, and the latter’s loss to what emerged as a stronger political bloc of those supporting Nigerian political unity. Situated methodologically and historiographically at the intersection of scholarship on black internationalism and the international history of the Nigerian Civil War, this thesis demonstrates the way the civil war not only provoked intense activism, but did so in ways that fundamentally connected with the central ideas, themes and concerns of the black freedom struggle in the United States.

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## Sounding out the past

Andrew Harrison

Abstract of a thesis for a Doctorate of Philosophy submitted to  
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This thesis explores the relationship between music composition and historical narrative, and considers whether

creative works inspired by historical events offer an alternative perspective on the past.