ASU Center for Latina/os and American Politics Research
Arizona State University

ASU School of Politics and Global Studies
Arizona State University

Kopf Conference Abstracts – Fall 2022

Influence Through Diversity and Size: The Success of Racial Minority Interest Groups (RMIGs) Lobbying Coalitions

Nhat-Dang Do, Trinity College

Many scholars argue that business groups and other wealthy, elite interests dominate the American lobbying system. Racial minority interest groups, or RMIGs, primarily represent the interests of marginalized racial communities with fewer resources to contribute to organizational lobbying and who have very little political power. From this perspective, RMIGs should have little or no influence on policymaking. Is this empirically true? Under what conditions can RMIGs and similarly situated interest groups influence policymaking? I argue that race's high saliency in American politics has set RMIGs on a different path than traditional interest groups and has shaped their resources and strategies. Using this idea as a starting point and an original dataset of over 250,000 California bill analyses from 1997 to 2018, I show that RMIGs' ability to influence politics dramatically increases when they build large and diverse lobbying coalitions.

A Latinx Approach to the Pro-Life Movement

Anne Whitesell

The pro-life movement has long been associated with the rise of the religious right and conservative Christianity, and public opinion research shows that individuals' religious beliefs is a strong predictor of attitudes towards abortion. A new generation of pro-life organizations, however, frame opposition to abortion as less about religion and more a matter of human rights. Other pro-life organizations, while often run by people of faith, choose to downplay the role of religion in their advocacy. Interviews with pro-life activists reveal this is an intentional move intended to broaden the base of support beyond those who hold religious beliefs. Contrary to the approach of many groups, I find that Latinx pro-life organizations continue to use religious framing to oppose abortion, often with explicit references to Catholicism. This strategic choice raises questions about the salience of shared religious background to mobilize around other political issues.

We're All in this Together: Cross-Racial Linked Fate Among Non-Latino Whites and Blacks

Lisa Sanchez, University of Arizona

Since Dawson (1994), linked fate has been theorized to accrue to in-group populations, almost exclusively. I question whether linked fate can occur between, rather than within, racial groups. Building on the existing linked-fate literature, I propose a theory of cross-racial linked fate which defines the political cohesion between African Americans and non-Latino whites. Using novel survey measures from the 2019 Pew Race Survey, I demonstrate that 44% of white respondents and 48% of black respondents report cross racial linked fate. These findings are not animated by partisanship, but instead by experience with discrimination and racial stereotypes, intergroup contact, feelings of in-group linked fate, racial attitudes, and discussion of race. This study representants a novel extension of the linked fate literature and has important, far-reaching implications for the use of traditional linked-fate metrics among in-group populations, their interpretation, and the possible cohesion between historically competitive racial groups.

The Last Shall be Last: Ethnic, Racial, and Nativist Bias in Distributive Politics

Thad Kousser and Gerald Gamm

Examining historical budget and spending patterns from state legislatures, we show that inequality evident in other realms of American politics had a profound, dollars-and-cents, impact on the expenditures that flowed to political districts. Given the salience of race, class, and immigration status to American politics, we would expect that distributive spending reflects the same biases that shape voting patterns, representation, and policymaking. But, to our knowledge, this question has not previously been studied. Drawing on detailed, archival data from six states in the 1921-1961 era, we uncover clear evidence of bias. Districts with more immigrants win significantly less money, controlling for a host of other factors. So do districts with large numbers of non-whites. Thus residents of districts dominated by native-born, Anglo constituencies receive more dollars than those in other districts, even when controlling for the identities of legislators and other characteristics of the districts.

Diversity for Access? Legislative Diversity, Identity Group Mobilization, and Lobbying

James Strickland and Nathan Tarr

We examine the effects of ethnic and racial diversification among legislators on identity-group mobilization and the hiring of nonwhite lobbyists. We propose that diversity among legislators encourages identity groups to lobby, that these groups hire lobbyists who reflect their members' identities, and that all interests hire lobbyists who reflect the identities of their legislative targets. We apply a Bayesian estimation approach developed by Imai and Khanna (2016) to infer to ethnic or racial identities of lobbyists active in the American states since the 1940s. Upon presenting descriptive information regarding the mobilization of identity groups and diversification of lobbyists, we find that the election of African Americans to state legislatures encouraged black identity groups to lobby, that all identity groups, including those representing Hispanics or Latinos, generally hired lobbyists who reflected their members' identities, and that the election of Asian Americans to state legislatures encouraged all interests to hire Asian-American lobbyists.

Excerpts from *No Longer Outsiders: Black and Latino Interest Group Advocacy on Capitol Hill*

Michael Minta, University of Minnesota

With the rise of Black Lives Matter and immigrant rights protests, critics have questioned whether mainstream black and Latino civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and UnidosUS are in touch with the needs of minorities—especially from younger generations. Though these mainstream groups have relied on insider political tactics, such as lobbying and congressional testimony, to advocate for minority interests, Michael D. Minta argues that these strategies are still effective tools for advocating for progressive changes. In *No Longer Outsiders,* Minta provides a comprehensive account of the effectiveness of minority civil rights organizations and their legislative allies. He finds that the organizations' legislative priorities are consistent with black and Latino preferences for stronger enforcement of civil rights policy and immigration reform. Although these groups focus mainly on civil rights for blacks and immigration issues for Latinos, their policy agendas extend into other significant areas. Minta concludes with an examination of how diversity in Congress helps groups gain greater influence and policy success despite many limits placed upon them.

Evaluating the Minority Candidate Penalty with a Regression Discontinuity Approach

Eric Juenke, Michigan State University

Do parties face an electoral penalty when they nominate candidates of color? We use a regression discontinuity design with state legislative election data from 2018 and 2020 to isolate the effect of nominating a candidate of color on the party's general election performance. Using this approach with real-world data heightens external validity relative to existing racial penalty studies, which are largely supported by surveys and experiments. We find no evidence that candidates of color are disadvantaged in state legislative general elections, relative to narrowly-nominated white candidates from the same party. These findings challenge leading explanations for the underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minority groups, with implications for candidate selection across the United States.

A Hollow Prize? State Party Context, Descriptive Representation and Party Control in the States

Robert Preuhs, Metropolitan State University of Denver

A critical linkage between Latinos' and other minorities' preferences and policy influence in the American states is the degree of which those interests are included in the legislative decision-making process. While a variety of factors condition the relationship between interests and policy, the increasing influence of partisan control on state policies suggests that membership in the majority party may be more important than ever in maintaining a link between minority preferences and minority policy responsiveness. In this paper, the role of the states' racial/ethnic contexts in both the racial/ethnic composition of mass parties and legislative caucuses are estimated using the cumulative CCES and state legislative composition data, respectively. The analyses subsequently examine the degree to which racial/ethnic partisan parity in the masses leads to racial/ethnic partisan parity within state legislative caucuses, and the degree to which gains in minority representation between 2010 and 2019 materialized within co-partisan control of the state legislature. We show that for Latinos, gains in representation have not occurred disproportionately within minority parties, but this is not the case for African American descriptive representation which increased more modestly and in states where Republicans tended to gain or maintain control of the legislature. The implications for these specific findings and the broader role that state racial/ethnic contexts play in linking Latino preferences to public policy are discussed.