

NOT YOUR PARENTS' POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION: Introduction for a New Generation

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■ **Abstract** The field of political socialization is often stereotyped in terms of some of the earliest work in the field and is neglected outside certain areas of American political behavior. However, the continuing and vibrant stream of work in political socialization holds potential for addressing many critical issues across American, comparative, and international politics. This article discusses three themes: the construction of a more genuinely comparative field of political socialization, a reconsideration of the relevance of childhood to politics following its virtual abandonment by the field for many years, and the importance of understanding the origins of preferences.

Cidadania não tem tamanho/Tamanho não é documento.

You don't have to be big to be a citizen/Size is not important.

Augusto Sérgio Suares Dutra, a 10-year-old Brazilian,
quoted in Guerra 2002, p. 77

INTRODUCTION

A Few Questions

By the end of the 1980s, the fall of one authoritarian regime after another raised new hopes for a worldwide shift toward democracy. But democracy did not emerge like a waterfall bursting to life during a spring thaw. Among the many impediments was the halting development of civil society, new regime norms, and new day-to-day norms and practices of politics. How do people who have learned to live in one system adapt to and even help shape an entirely new one? When people's long experience tells them to expect only capriciousness or brutality from politics, under what circumstances and by what process can they develop the fundamental trust in government and political process that is necessary for democracy to flourish? How can new regimes help the citizenry live with the past, including the still-living agents of the old regime, and move productively forward? How do they deal with

the problems of historical memory, truth-finding and truth-telling, and eventual reconciliation?

In many of those same countries, state boundaries shattered as virulent ethnic, religious, and language group rivalries erupted in violence. How did such profound identity-based conflict emerge, even where the state had controlled the institutions of education, mass media, and religion for decades?

In many parts of the world, whole generations of children have grown up under conditions of devastating political violence or oppression. What can their political future be, even if the current systems of violence and oppression end? What kinds of citizens can these children become? What are the political implications of the frustration, pain, and anger they may carry with them to adulthood, and their lack of experience not just with democratic political systems, but with any political system they could regard as positive?

What leads people to join political groups that engage them in killing civilians, even children, for a political cause, and how do people become willing to die in order to wreak terror?

Even within the long-consolidated democracies, both long- and short-term changes raise questions about the development of citizens' political "hearts and minds." New waves of global migration leave many countries wondering about the impact of immigrants on national and local political cultures, and how to integrate new residents and citizens into unfamiliar political systems.

Shifts in global politics have created newly significant subnational and supranational political units that change the nature of citizenship, in which people who have spent their careers as political leaders of sovereign countries now act as collaborators in building common policies, identities, and currency.

In many countries, commentators worry about the decline in political engagement from one generation to the next.

The field of political socialization offers scholarly frameworks to address all of these problems and questions.

The Rise and Curious History of Political Socialization

Political socialization as a field can be defined by a pair of interlocked macro- and microlevel phenomena. At the macro level, political socialization frames research on how politics and other political societies and systems inculcate appropriate norms and practices in citizens, residents, or members. (Throughout this discussion I use the term "practices" rather than "behavior" because of its more extensive connotation. Political practices include not only activities conventionally understood to be political, but also, for example, how one goes about trying to decide what one thinks about an issue, or what style one uses in political discussion.) The major original theoretical justifications for the study of political socialization, found most explicitly in Almond & Verba's (1963) *The Civic Culture* and in Easton's (1965, 1967) development of a "systems theory" approach to politics, defined political socialization as a crucial mechanism for creating (in Almond

& Verba's terms) a political culture that could allow democratic institutions and practices to function or (in Easton's terms) an appropriate support function on the input side of the political system.

At the micro level, political socialization frames research on the patterns and processes by which individuals engage in political development and learning, constructing their particular relationships to the political contexts in which they live.

These two views of political socialization are complementary, but they tend to frame research questions and methods in somewhat different ways. Especially in recent years, scholars with a more microlevel orientation have tended to base their work in developmental and cognitive psychology. Conover (1991) argues that these looking-glass perspectives should be regarded as distinct and distinctly named phenomena, but whether this is advisable or not, the field as a whole would be severely stunted without both kinds of approaches.

Hyman's (1959) *Political Socialization* both named a new field and provided its opening contribution. Hyman defined political socialization as an individual's "learning of social patterns corresponding to his societal positions as mediated through various agencies of society." He noted that the importance of certain regularities in the patterns of political behavior among citizens, and their continuity over time, suggested that political learning—and specifically, political socialization—deserve much more scholarly attention. He expressed surprise that his literature search revealed virtually no work by political scientists on precursors to adult politics, and no references to political behavior and attitudes by students of socialization and learning in the other social sciences. Within a few years the former, at least, had changed. Although political socialization is properly an interdisciplinary field, the emphasis on political learning and contexts tends to be too "applied" for the taste of psychologists.

A survey of the on-line repository JSTOR in search of political science articles that use the term socialization in the abstract in shows that the first such article appeared in 1958, followed by a second in 1960 and a third in 1964. Figure 1 displays the continuing history is displayed as a moving five-year cluster of the publication of articles, beginning with the five years centered on 1960 and ending with the five years centered on 1997. Greenstein was certainly correct in 1970 when he wrote, "Political socialization is a growth stock" (Greenstein 1970, p. 969). But Cook (1985) was also correct to sense a downswing—certainly an end to massive growth—by the 1980s. What is more notable, however, is that even according to the crude indicator used here, published research that highlights political socialization continues to flow.

It is curious, therefore, that at the time of this writing, not a single top-15 department of political science in the United States appears to be offering either an undergraduate or graduate course on political socialization during a two-year period, and only two (the University of Michigan and the University of Wisconsin–Madison) seem to have such a course on their books. In other words, the discipline of political science is not providing its next generation of scholars with an

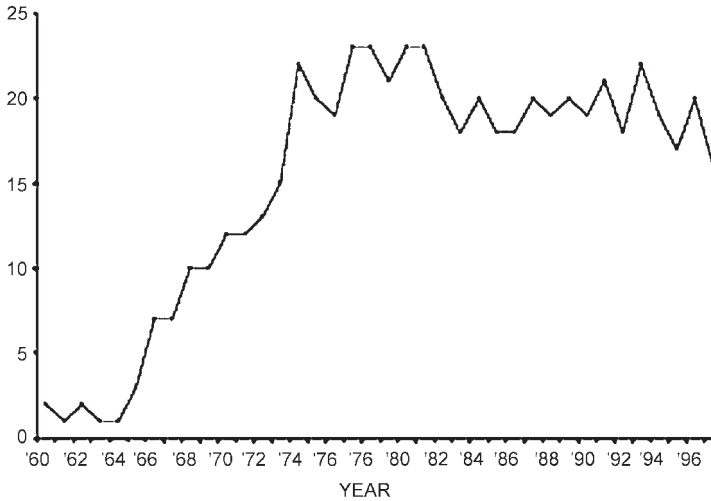


Figure 1 Moving five-year publication of political socialization articles. Source: analysis of JSTOR listings.

opportunity for sustained study of political socialization. Surely the questions of how people develop their basic sets of political skills, orientations, and practices, and how their experiences shape their politics are as pressing as ever. But it is likely that although there is valuable work in the field, and considerable potential for new and important avenues of inquiry, the image of political socialization research was formed decades ago and has not kept up with the field's progress. Much has changed, including the psychology on which studies of development are based (Kagan 2003), the preoccupations and methods of the broader field of political psychology (Sears et al. 2003), and the kinds of problems for which political scientists are likely to find political socialization an appropriate conceptual tool.

Many valuable critical reviews of the first generation of political socialization research are available; there is no need to retread those tracks (Bennett 1977, Conover 1991, Cook 1985, Dennis 1968, Greenstein 1970, Marsh 1971, Merelman 1972, Niemi & Hepburn 1995, Renshon 1977, Rosenberg 1985). More recent reviews cover many important aspects of the field, including especially life-long learning models of political socialization and the recent explosion of work on the development of civic engagement (Galston 2001, Sears 1989, Sears & Levy 2003). The centerpieces of current research in the field build on the past, focusing on matters such as citizen and democratic education (Galston 2001, Ichilov 2003), partisanship (Achen 2002, Ventura 2001), generational and life-course change and continuity (Jennings et al. 2001, Jennings & Stoker 2002), and gender and/or race in political socialization (Rosenthal et al. 2003, Sears & Levy 2003), among other topics.

This article discusses some of the less commonly trodden areas of the field that should attract systematic study by a wider group of political scientists. It also

emphasizes literatures that may be less familiar to most political scientists, even in the field of political socialization. The discussion is organized around three arguments that, although not revolutionary, go against stereotype and perhaps the grain: (a) Political socialization is not a subfield of American politics (or, at least, no more than it is a subfield of comparative or international politics); (b) students of political socialization—and political scientists more generally—should not abandon childhood; and (c) the origins of preferences matter, sometimes to a life-and-death degree.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION IS NOT A SUBFIELD OF AMERICAN POLITICS

Political socialization research has focused primarily on the development of citizenship in the United States, and secondarily on other advanced industrial democracies, primarily in Western Europe. A smattering of work covers other countries and international relations. Clearly, we have learned too little about political socialization outside the United States.

But the more fundamental problem for the field of political socialization as a whole is that its basic questions, theories, and conclusions about how people become part of the fabric of their political communities and how they develop their political orientations and practices are framed by observations of an excessively limited range of political contexts. Without examining political socialization across more varied contexts, we are bound to miss important questions and are hobbled in our attempts to evaluate the standing of extant theory. Advances of this sort depend on two things: (a) encouraging more scholars whose primary substantive focus lies outside American politics to investigate political socialization theory and research systematically; and (b) encouraging political socialization scholars whose primary substantive focus is American society to delve seriously into the political socialization literature focusing elsewhere. Both developments will require transcending some long-standing limitations of the different subfields of political science.

If the only real cross-national difference relevant to socialization were that in different places socialization agents transmit different messages about government, politics, and citizenship to their citizens and residents, then the lack of comparative, transnational, or historical work would pose no fundamental challenge to political socialization theory. The process of political socialization would be similar in all countries, leading to varied outcomes depending on the message. But all the major institutions that serve as agents of socialization—families, schools, the mass media, political parties, nongovernmental organizations, the military, and government itself—vary in their structures, operating norms, and relationships to people's everyday experience in different countries. This means that the ways in which and the degrees to which they are likely to shape people's basic political orientations and practices should vary as well. We are limited in our understanding of the process of political socialization—what agents are involved, when, and how, and

what moderates socialization and learning—and not just in our knowledge of what is learned in different places. This variation in social and political structure and practice opens up interesting and important empirical questions about the very nature of the process of political socialization. Let us look at some examples.

National Identity and Its Competitors

The development of politically relevant identities, including national identity, is likely to vary in substantial ways cross-nationally. National identity was not much studied by political socialization scholars who focused on the United States in the early days of the field, probably because the problem was not as pressing a concern in the United States at that time. Of course, had the field been active earlier in the twentieth century during the substantial waves of immigration that resulted in dramatic changes in immigration and naturalization policy and school curricula, things might have been different. Research on political socialization among immigrant and border people began to grow relatively recently (Tam Cho 1999, Stepick & Stepick 2002, Wong 2000). But the US literature has tended to focus on such matters as the development of partisanship and electoral behavior rather than on national identity development. National identity, not surprisingly, has been a more common political socialization theme in other countries, such as Israel, where the question also has had more pressing policy relevance (Black et al. 1987, Gitelman 1982, Ichilov 2002a). More information about more countries will add to our knowledge. But real advances in the field will result from testing theories that can take account of and explain cross-national variation.

Although a substantial portion of the American population was born in or has close ties to another country, the United States has long had a widespread cultural norm that defines a citizen's former nationality as something either to leave behind or to transform into "ethnicity," stripped of notions of current membership or, certainly, citizenship. However, this norm is not absolute, there are variations across groups, and the United States liberalized its laws on dual citizenship in the 1980s. Sears & Levy (2003) offer a good review of models of ethnic development based on comparative empirical work.

The world is increasingly populated by peoples who have nested or multiple, and sometimes competing, nationalities and even citizenships. Shifts in the politics of indigenous peoples, including American Indians, are relevant to this problem. So is the rise in global migration. But so is a political structure change such as devolution in Great Britain, where now one citizen can be represented in both the Scottish and British Parliaments, not to mention the European Parliament. The Glaswegian is asked to consider herself Scottish, British, and European. (Happily for this person of multiple nationalities, there is no British or European football team.) Across the Channel, citizens of the various European Community member countries are even more likely to define themselves as European citizens.

The political world has long been populated with both subnational and supra-national governmental and quasigovernmental structures, but the current era is

witnessing a rise in both the political importance of these entities and the degree to which sub- and supranational entities demand or depend on a sense of membership, citizenship, or other forms of identity. These create new contexts in which political identity and membership must develop, and more scope for developing multiple political memberships that may conflict with each other on occasion (Martinez-Herrera 2002).

Much of the research on political socialization within the field of international politics focuses on the special problem of elite socialization, especially the question of how political leaders who developed their careers within a national context reorient their norms and practices to assume roles as regional leaders (Checkel 2001, Hooghe 1999, Schimmelfennig 2000).

Many experts argue that globalization is having an increasing influence on ordinary citizens and their relationship to politics. In a report on education for democratic citizenship written for the Council of Europe, Bîrzéa (2000) reminds us that globalization is not a trend toward homogenization, as some critics argue, but rather its opposite. Devolution and the rise of localisms are as much part of the process of globalization as is the spread of McDonald's, Benetton, or Sony around the globe. Bîrzéa (2000) writes that

the political community is no longer based on kinship and origin. On the contrary, it is gradually arranged along concentric circles of political socialization, directed from the local to the general, from particular to universal, from proximal to global identities, from state to supranational entities. From this perspective, the members of a community may choose any political entity for their own identification.

Of course, the degree to which this is true, or feels true to citizens, most likely depends on the political context. The development of nationality and other political organizers of identity is also a historical process that depends on causes other than globalization.

But to say it is "historical" does not tell us about the process by which nationality becomes integrated into the political orientations of real people. In some cases shifts may occur from generation to generation, whereas in other cases particular cohorts may be moved to change their conceptions. Hsu (2001), for example, explores the development of Taiwanese identity as a national identity to be contrasted with Chinese identity.

Ideology and Party as Political Frameworks and Identity

An area that has received particular attention in comparative studies of political socialization is the transmission of left-right ideology and attachment to political parties. Although socialization to partisanship has been a persistent interest among socialization researchers, Percheron & Jennings (1981) opened an important theoretical debate in their French study by pursuing the hypothesis that the structure of party systems might determine the degree to which children would acquire either

partisanship or ideological position as basic forms of political identity (in the latter case, “I am of the left” rather than “I am a member of the X Party”). Such characteristics as the number of political parties and their ideological polarization, whether parties work in coalition or bloc form, and long-term patterns in the lifespan of parties are all likely to determine the degree to which party or ideological labels (or some combination) serve as central, everyday political concepts that young people acquire as the basic vocabulary of politics. The same structural characteristics influence whether such labels serve as key organizers of political attachment and identity that children are likely to acquire from their parents (for a review of the literature, see Ventura 2001).

From the point of view of socialization research, the context of party structure does not automatically “translate” into partisanship. Rather, the way that political institutions operate (for example, the degree to which parties organize policy, and the stability of parties and the party system over time) will encourage people to use some frameworks for organizing political choice rather than others. That context affects the likelihood that young people will witness their parents emphasizing partisanship or something else as a fundamental clue to understanding the political world (assuming their parents are involved in politics). If we observe two families in different contexts in which parents vote fairly consistently for the same party, the children in one family may acquire from that example the idea that choices on the left are good, whereas the children in another may learn that X Party is good. Where the organizing principles are salient enough, they may be experienced not as mere preferences (I like the left wing/X Party) but as aspects of identity (I am of the left/I am a member of the X Party).

Political Change and Political Socialization

The implications of macrolevel change and stability for political socialization merit systematic comparative study. Regimes vary in the stability of the socializing context they provide to citizens and residents within a recent-generations time frame, and regime change is accompanied by varying degrees of difference in underlying norms and practices. Drawing the core framework and questions of the field of political socialization from the context of late-twentieth-century America is a problem because it has led to a prevailing assumption that the point of political socialization research is to investigate the induction of young people into a relatively coherent and stable political system. This stability assumption also strengthens the traditional view that political socialization occurs primarily in childhood and perhaps young adulthood. The study of political socialization under conditions of rapid change or instability has been treated as a “special topic” in the field.

CHARACTERIZING CHANGE It would be more appropriate to imagine the context of political socialization as varying along a continuum from highly stable and continuous political regimes and cultures to those undergoing dramatic eruptions. But the amount of change or continuity would not be the most interesting influence on socialization. Many other characteristics of political change suggest themselves

as potential influences on how citizens develop political orientations and practices: How fundamental are the changes in political norms? How recent was the change? Is the context one in which noticeable change occurs frequently? How evolutionary or revolutionary was the process? Did it evolve from internal forces, for example, as a result of the work of social movements, parties, or factions that had been gaining adherents for some time, or was it imposed from the outside?

We might also consider whether there is a context of substantial change that is nested within a more stable situation. For example, in the United States in the past half century—which surely belongs at the stable end of the political-continuity continuum—the political context has changed much more dramatically for some social groups than for others. Fifty years ago, African Americans were virtually disenfranchised; white Southerners had hegemonic race-based political power organized through the Democratic Party; and the vast majority of American women had no examples of women who had been elected to govern them. For socialization purposes, the nesting of contexts is important, providing a more complex set of influences on what and how people might learn about government and politics.

The point here is not merely that political socialization approaches could help us understand how citizenship and nationality develop in particular change contexts, such as a changing regime or new nation. Rather, it is that drawing rich and valid conclusions about the process of political socialization requires understanding how it depends on the degree and types of continuity and change in the political context. Universalistic generalizations from observations of political socialization in the United States, Australia, or the Netherlands are no more valid than those from observations in Russia, South Africa, or Nigeria. All of these political contexts are ones in which real people live. All of them exhibit characteristics that are the norm somewhere.

DRAMATIC CHANGE Not surprisingly, a growing body of research has been investigating political socialization under conditions of dramatic change. Much of it focuses on the former Soviet bloc and looks at the political orientations and practices of people who spent a significant portion of their conscious political lives under the old regime. It seems reasonable to expect that most people neither retain exactly their old political subjectivities and habits (engaging in the same practices would be especially unlikely given transformation of political institutions and processes) nor suddenly transform into completely new political persons. But what is retained and changed, and why, and with what effects?

Consider a small sample of the many relevant findings of recent research on the former East Germany. A study of Leipzig citizens in 1993, 1996, and 1998 found that although socialist values at first had an inverse impact on democratic support, as time went on, people increasingly assessed the current regime in terms of its own performance rather than in comparison to the old regime. By 1998, evaluation of the current system seemed to shape socialist values rather than the reverse (Finkel et al. 2001). Another study of the former East Germany suggests

that the legacy of the old system has different effects depending on whether we consider political, economic, or religious behavior, and on whether we look at leaders or ordinary citizens (Davidson-Schmich et al. 2002). Other work suggests that posing “socialization” versus “situational” models for explaining political orientations and practices under conditions of regime change is a false dichotomy in the first place; the two models in fact have to be integrated (Grix 2000).

HISTORICAL MEMORY A further issue in understanding political socialization in the context of change is the construction and impact of collective or historical memory, terms used synonymously here. Although the concept of collective memory has not yet been well integrated into the study of political socialization, it should be. Learning why the founding of the nation was good, who caused the war or suffering, what stories best represent who we are, and what songs or rituals should make our blood race are all important elements of political socialization, especially because they help to weave the appropriate emotional substance into political understanding and response. This is why many nations and movements use as a ritually repeated catchphrase some variation of “Never forget!” or “remember _____!”

Collective memory refers not to the particular past encounters an individual has experienced (for example, one’s own experience of poverty during the Depression, or the sights and sounds one witnessed at the Berlin Wall when it went up or down) but to the meaning-giving stories that come to be known as “the history” of a time, phenomenon, or event. Collective memory is neither the aggregate of particular memories carried and passed on by those present at an event nor a mere “residue” of past events (Sears 2002, p. 255). Collective memory of political events is usually constructed at least partly through explicit actions of story and symbol creation. It often involves contention among factions with different interests who spin the story differently. Periods of nation building have historically been intense periods of active collective-history creation that result in the stories people tell about “their” past and the rituals and performances they learn to remind themselves and the next generations about their past. (For the US case, see for example Newman 1997, Travers 1997, Waldstreicher 1997.)

In recent years, an important process that has followed the fall of especially brutal regimes has been the concerted pursuit of “truth and reconciliation,” which involves various processes for determining how the sources and nature of the brutality should be understood, how to deal with the constructed memory of the past, and how to act toward the still-living agents and victims of past brutality. As Heribert (2000) points out, there are two approaches to this construction: one that views historical memory as a means to prevent future brutality, and one that aims at revenge or retribution. Different countries have used different processes to construct and deal with historical memory of brutal regimes (Kritz 1995). The point for research on political socialization is that the linkage between experience of regime change and citizens’ development and enactment of basic political orientations and practices is more complicated than what remains of the

learning from the old regime plus what is instilled by new experience; the impact of old and new experiences is mediated by stories and representations that are reconstructed as part of the process of change. Furthermore, collective memory is not just the cultural representations that appear in public documents; it becomes collective memory only if it is learned and integrated into individuals' memory and framing of events. This integration process is the subject matter of political socialization.

CHANGE AND INDIVIDUAL LIVES Personal political experience is, of course, also important in the long-term impact of the experience of historical events, but the way in which personal political experience shapes people's future orientations and practices is not a simple matter. It is contingent on characteristics of the individual and on present and future context and experience. Schumann and colleagues have found, for example, that the impact of historical events is greatest when they occur in adolescence and young adulthood (Schumann & Corning 2000, Schumann & Scott 1989; for a review of the short- and long-term effects of events, see Sears 2002). The greater impressionability of young people to the impact of political events does not, however, necessarily yield the types of generational effects so popularly discussed by pundits and journalists. People of a particular age do not homogeneously differ from people of other ages in their views because of their common experiences. As Mannheim (1952 [1928]) argued long ago, and Jennings (1987, 2002) has shown in his panel socialization study, we must take account not only of generations but of "generation units"—the different relationships people from a single generation had with the original event. For example, those who took different positions or actions in response to a war or social movement should not be lumped together on the basis of their age.

Contributions of Cultural and Comparative Psychology

The fields of cultural and comparative psychology provide important theoretical underpinnings for research on political socialization (Shweder et al. 2000). Because the core of political socialization is not so much what people have learned as how they learn and under what circumstances, it is essential that students of political socialization be familiar with the basic models and methods of relevant fields of psychology, even if their primary interest is in the macrolevel approaches to political socialization. An important and relevant issue in the fields of cultural and comparative psychology is whether basic psychological processing and development transcends culture or is culture-specific. If it transcends culture, as the dominant view of the discipline of psychology suggests, then the context from which we draw our understanding of psychological processing (including learning) does not matter. Americans should find psychological research on cognitive processing in Mumbai or Seoul as relevant to understanding themselves as research in Cleveland or Chicago. If, on the other hand, culture and learning shape the ways that cognition works, the study of political socialization is more complicated.

Plenty of research finds cross-cultural differences in values and beliefs that may have important linkages to political orientations and practices. One of the most fruitful areas of research has focused on cross-national and cross-cultural variation in the relative emphasis people place on individualism and collectivism, or rights-based versus obligations-based senses of relationship. The modal mix of individualism and collectivism found in different cultures, in turn, shapes how people evaluate alternative courses of action, their lay theories of social life, and what kinds of social situations are likely to make them feel good or bad, ashamed or satisfied. But these are substantive differences in values, not differences in fundamental methods of cognition or learning. It is plausible that even if Americans and Japanese end up in different places on a continuum of individualism versus collectivism in their orientations, the processes by which they acquire these values and apply them in cognitive processing are the same (Dennis et al. 2002).

But some research suggests that cultures may differ in how learning of social norms takes place, whatever those social norms may be. First, if people learn different basic values and norms in different cultures, these may in turn shape how learning occurs, under what circumstances, or through what motivations. But second, cultures may differ specifically in their understanding of agency and action in a way that can, in turn, shape political socialization. For example, Rogoff et al. (2003) contrast two forms of teaching that permeate not only school-based pedagogical methods but also the everyday practices of socialization. The first is a transmission model, in which an expert (parent, teacher, or other agent) transmits knowledge to a child or other learner. In the transmission model, the activity of the receiver of the learning is just that—learning.¹ The other model is what Rogoff and her colleagues call “intent participation,” which they describe as “observing and listening in anticipation of or in the process of engaging in an endeavor,” or “observation as an aspect of participation” (Rogoff et al. 2003, p. 177).

They find evidence that different cultures emphasize different mixes of these two models. Within American middle-class culture, for example, children tend to be segregated from adult activities, learning formally and informally through processes that are relatively separated from the actual locus of participation and are specially designed with didactic purposes in mind. In other cultures, children are more widely present in “real-world” activities (rather than being relegated to a preparatory world) and are expected to observe and participate to an increasing degree as they mature. Rogoff and her colleagues point out cultural differences in children’s attentiveness and observation, which they attribute to this difference in learning methods. If they are correct, then the process of socialization itself is likely to be fundamentally culture-dependent. An important implication of cultural differences in the “intent participation” of children is that their relationship to politics may vary significantly.

¹Rogoff et al. (2003) label this the “assembly-line” model, a term that seems less descriptive of the process and more normatively loaded.

RECONSIDERING CHILDREN AND CHILDHOOD IN POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

The study of political socialization is widely regarded as the study of children. Most of the best-known early work in the field surveyed children's political understanding (Easton & Dennis 1967, Greenstein 1965, Hess & Torney 1967). Children were studied not because they were widely regarded as political agents worthy of understanding in their own right, but because of the conventional wisdom that a substantial portion of people's basic orientations to politics is established early in life. "The child is father of the man," as Wordsworth put it. But most of the subjective phenomena that conventionally interest political scientists did not seem to be established demonstrably in childhood. The core of empirical attention in political socialization shifted to adolescence, early adulthood, and later, largely through the rich contributions and examples of Jennings and colleagues (Jennings & Niemi 1974, 1981).

Recent research reconfirms the importance of adolescence in the development of citizen orientations and engagement. Studies of citizen education and especially service learning forms suggest that adolescence can be an important time for initiating people into habits of political engagement (Galston 2001). This may be especially true where, instead of merely teaching young people about politics, with perhaps some opportunities for participation, civic education explicitly focuses on development of civic skills such as effective communication and cooperation (Kirlin 2002), and where direct engagement is carefully integrated with academic content (McLellan & Youniss 2003).

There are also good reasons to believe that political science is missing opportunities to understand the development of political orientations and practices if we abandon children. To explore these reasons, let us consider why the first 10 or 15 years of people's lives might be considered uninteresting to scholars of political culture and political behavior and orientations. The two core reasons are the cognitive incompetence of children and the irrelevance of politics in children's lives.

Cognitive Incompetence?

Babies begin life incapable of understanding or acting in politics because they lack sufficient cognitive functioning. Only as they approach their second year do they acquire the capacity for memory, which, in turn, allows them to start to use language, be aware of their own feelings and abilities, and infer the intentions and feelings of others. The ability to form semantic networks, linking symbolic representations (such as words) with sensations, memories, anticipated consequences or causality, and more abstract and higher-order classifications of experience develops slowly over the first five or six years (Kagan 2003).

Kagan argues that recent advances in physiological psychology have profoundly changed scholars' understanding of cognitive development, which suggests that

unless political socialization experts have kept up with research in developmental psychology—which most have not—their grasp of that field is likely to be outdated. Although a massive amount of development occurs in the first two years, the experiences of babies (outside of severe deprivation) may have less impact on later cognitive development than many psychologists thought. “No scientist has been able to demonstrate that a particular set of experiences during the first two years in children growing up in typical American or European homes produces a particular adolescent or adult outcome in even one-tenth of those exposed to those experiences” (Kagan 2003, p. 13).

The critical competency question for political socialization is to determine the age at which children’s cognitive capacities begin to allow them to learn and retain knowledge from their experiences that can contribute to shaping political orientations and practices. Political thinking and response involves many different kinds of capabilities that develop through childhood in ways that depend variously on biological maturation, sequencing of abilities (for example, doing simple classifications before more complex or multiple classifications), and the child’s experiences. Although some political socialization research has drawn on developmental psychology (e.g., Merelman 1971, Rosenberg et al. 1988), there is considerable room for reinvigorating the connections between developmental psychology and political socialization, both because developmental psychology has more to offer political scientists than it once did (Lerner 2000, Turiel 1997) and because of changes in the range of phenomena political scientists find of interest compared with the early days of political socialization.

IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION One set of developmental building blocks that is more central to political science now than when the field of political socialization was young is social categorization and identity. Although young children may not be competent to analyze the details of social policy, by the age of five or six they display the tendency to perceive and react to people through social-group categorization, and they are certainly capable of developing social identities that are potentially politically relevant. Identities are not only an internal, psychological phenomenon but also an integrated set of practices that mark who people are and what their relationships are with other people (Gerson 2001). Parents begin to teach even their toddlers the dress, songs, and food appropriate to their social group. Thus, by a young age, children begin to be inducted into the intergroup relations that may be politically important in their environments. A rich literature on race, socialization, and child development offers examples of the importance of social-group and intergroup socialization for political socialization (Sears & Levy 2003).

Bennett & Sani (2003), for example, used the “who said what” technique to determine whether children use gender and race categorization in person perception. Children as young as five years old made more within-gender and within-race mistakes in identifying who said what than across-gender and across-race mistakes. They had already learned to use these social markers to make meaning about

people. This does not mean that young children necessarily use stereotypes, for example, to exclude other children from activities. A study of white middle-class American children found that younger children especially tended to reject excluding others from play activities on the basis of conventional stereotypes. Indeed, they regularly decided to include children in antistereotypic activities in order to “give them a chance.” Older children were more likely to accept exclusion that was consistent with stereotyping when it was justified not specifically on a gender or race basis, but rather, in terms of how well a group would function if a particular person was included. Girls rejected exclusionary choices more than boys did (Killen & Stangor 2001).

Research on African American and Latino children in the United States shows important systematic variation in the kinds of racial socialization parents give their children, and the relationship between this socialization and their strategies for coping with racism (Highes 2003, Scott 2003). Children also tend to use nationality to make inferences about people from an early age, and this tendency increases as they age (Martin et al. 2003).

To the degree that social-group categorizations based on diverse factors such as nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, language group, the rebel forces who may come into our village, the government informer, and other markers of power and resource relations are important frameworks for political relations, research to understand how these relations work must begin with young children.

POLITICAL COMPETENCIES A recent report from the Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) project describes an approach to understanding citizenship that casts it as a series of three broad categories of competencies that constitute democratic citizenship (Audigier 2000). Although this report does not discuss these competencies from the perspective of childhood development per se, they are worth outlining as a proposal for research on individual political development. Although some research begins to approach these types of competencies in cross-national studies of children, there is plenty of room for more analytical research (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). Each of the categories listed in Table 1 contains many elements that begin to develop early in childhood.

Irrelevance of Politics to Children

A lack of cognitive competence is not the only conventional reason for ignoring children in politics. The other is their dearth of political opportunities.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, surveys of children found them idealistic about political authority and political leaders (Greenstein 1965, Hess & Torney 1967), a finding widely attributed to the naivete of young children. But a well-known counter example showed that children from less happy surroundings had less benevolent views of political leaders (Jaros et al. 1968). And now, in an era in which American parents are probably less likely to shield their children from negative views of political leaders, children seem to have more jaded views themselves (Carter & Teten 2002). These variations in findings suggest that the idealism displayed in

TABLE 1 Competencies necessary for democratic citizenship (adapted from Audigier 2000)

Cognitive competencies

Knowledge about law, politics (especially the rules of collective life and political and legal institutions), powers and responsibilities of citizens

Knowledge of the present world, including its historical and cultural dimensions; ability to understand the subjects people discuss in politics

Procedural competencies that might be used in different political situations, such as the ability to argue, reflect on the limits of action, and recognize conflicts of values and interests

Knowledge of the principles and values of human rights and democratic citizenship

Ethical competencies and value choices, centered on freedom, equality, and solidarity

Recognition of relationships among people and different kinds of social identification and emotional linkages, including recognition of the self as a human subject, part of humanity

Capacities for action, or social competences

Capacity to live with others, to cooperate, including interculturally

Capacity to resolve conflicts in accordance with principles of democratic law

Capacity to take part in public debate

the early studies was instilled at least as much by the way adults structured the children's environment as it was by their "natural" childish naivete.

Adults probably tend to emphasize attachment, obedience, and passive citizen virtues in their earliest messages to children, and only later shift toward more active, critical, and analytical perspectives. Of course the balance between passive and active messages children receive is likely to depend on context and culture. In the early 1960s, Litt (1963) found that textbooks chosen for American schools provided different cues about citizenship norms depending on the predominant socioeconomic class of the students. More recently, Ichilov (2002b) found similar contrasts between academic and vocational high schools in Israel. It would be worthwhile to expand research on contextual differences in the messages children receive, both within and across countries.

Of course, even when children have the basic cognitive competence to think about and respond to politics, they possess few if any political or civic rights in most countries. In the United States, where the bulk of political socialization research has been generated, children are virtually segregated from the places where politics is enacted or even discussed. They are largely shielded from all but the most basic political information and views of politics that are contrary to their families' own. If children are segregated from politics, literally and figuratively "excused from the table" when adults deal with politics, there is little reason to expect their childhood experiences to start providing the substance of their adult political lives or to foster political engagement. In their interviews with ninth graders, Gimpel et al. (2003)

found that the young people believed that government wouldn't affect them until later in their lives, and therefore only then would they, like adults, be likely to take much interest. By then, presumably, they will have filled their hearts and minds with other things.

Politics is not so distant from or irrelevant to children's lives everywhere. Children's experiences are probably directly affected in societies that are undergoing dramatic political change or turmoil, although there is little research on this. Considerable evidence shows that throughout the world, children are more affected by war and civil conflict than ever (Hick 2001; Machel 2002, see also <http://www.unicef.org/graca/>). Although mental health research has focused on the developmental impacts of war and terrorism, as of yet, very little looks at the impact on children's political development. Such research is important for understanding the long-term effects of these situations. Although it is clear that children suffer from these stressful political events, the impacts are more complex than one might at first think (Slone et al. 1999). Moreover, children are not just passive victims of war and terror, but are regularly, perhaps increasingly, recruited as soldiers and agents in political violence. This participation also deserves research to examine its long-term impact on these citizens.

On a more positive note, children are engaged in politics to different degrees in different cultures and subcultures. Norms about children's participation in informal political discussion and deliberation probably vary, as do other forms of "intent participation." Some research suggests that children influence the adults around them, especially their parents and guardians, probably because of the discussions they stimulate and the way their presence may prompt parents to be good citizen role models (Linimon & Joslyn 2002, McDevitt & Chaffee 2002). If that is true, understanding what political issues stimulate children's interest and imagination may be important for the influence this will have on adults around them.

The notion that children should be considered citizens, with agency in their own right, has been gaining some ground, primarily because of the leadership of the United Nations through its attention to the rights of children. The United Nations' 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child incorporated children's active citizenship among its principles. Moreover, some social movements represent children's political agency, most notably Kids Can Free the Children, an organization founded in 1995 by a 12-year-old Canadian who was inspired by the story of a Pakistani child-labor activist who was murdered at age 12 for his activism (Stasiulis 2002). The United Nations not only held a Children's Forum in 2002 to address the issues of children's citizenship but invited a 13-year-old to address the General Assembly (Stasiulis 2002).

It is rare for adults to think of children as having responsible political agency that either might be worth studying in its own right or might be continuous with their later political agency as adults rather than just a precursor to it. This disregard is partly because of the issue of competence, discussed above. It is also because adults tend not to structure situations in which children are empowered to engage in political action in any meaningful way. And third, if children show agency,

adults tend to believe their actions are merely derivative and not “authentic.” However, rather than assuming the inauthenticity of children’s actions, Stasiulis (2002, p. 528) suggests, “A more fruitful strategy is to allow that children’s activism may indeed be influenced, guided, orchestrated, etc. by adult subjects, discourses and power, but that the degree to which this is so is a matter of empirical determination, rather than a priori assumption.” Certainly, given the frustration of political socialization experts in their attempts to find substantial parent-to-child transmission of political orientations and behavior, it seems likely that at least some of what young people say and do is not mere imitation.

One of the most impressive displays of children’s political agency is found in Barra Mansa, Brazil, where children have been organized and involved in a series of projects in which they study and deliberate municipal budget issues in council and communicate their findings to the adult forums (Example of a city consultation 2003, Guerra 2002). This is only one example of many efforts around the world to form not merely youth organizations but youth parliaments in which young people’s findings are granted some recognizable signs of respect and attention from adults (European Youth Forum 2003; Matthews et al. 1999).

Adults in various societies have often organized activities for children to draw them into politics and enrich their civic education. These are often “play politics” situations in which adults clearly take the guiding role in guiding children through their activities in parallel play with adult political activities. Examples are Kids Voting USA (<http://www.kidsvotingusa.org>) and the numerous model parliaments. Research suggests that these experiences do indeed have an impact on the children involved. But what is more rare are activities that directly connect children to the “real thing,” even if they do not have the full civil and political rights of adults. It is difficult to know the full extent of children’s political capabilities, or the degree to which political lives may be continuous, when there are few situations in which to observe children involved in politics in their larger communities. In recent decades, political socialization scholars have increasingly agreed that basic learning occurs throughout the life course. In that case, childhood must be included. Indeed, research shows that adults as well learn a significant amount through actual participation in consequential political and policy processes (Fitzpatrick & Sinclair 2003).

CONCLUSION: WHO CARES ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF PREFERENCES, ANYWAY?

Exploring the processes, stages, and sequences in the development of political orientations and practices has occasionally surfaced as an important task for public policy and nongovernmental political and policy organizations. This is true once again, and on a worldwide basis, largely because of the kinds of questions raised at the beginning of this review. In countries recovering from the trauma of brutal regimes and ethnic conflict, the question of how to bring about reconciliation and healing is a crucial one that necessitates exploring the impact of the brutality

and the means for recreating political subjectivities and practices. Because the brutality of politics is so often manifested in personal trauma, moving forward requires healing in a most literal and personal sense (Fourie 2000). To know how to do that requires understanding the process.

The dramatic regime shift witnessed since the 1980s revives questions that Almond & Verba (1963) asked in the earliest days of political socialization research: From where and how do people develop the kinds of political orientations and practices that transform the design of democratic constitutions and institutions into the creation of real, functioning democratic polities? The questions, methods, and assumptions have been changed by 40 years of scholarship, political experience including regime change into and out of democracy, and altered political sensibilities. But the questions are pressing. How do people learn to “do” democracy and civil society? How do they develop the passions for democracy and civic society that lead them to defend them over the long term when there seem to be so many threats in the short term? Many international and national agencies have formulated programs to advance the development of citizenship, and in some cases, scholars have been engaged in systematic research on their effects (Blair 2003).

The Council of Europe Project on Education for Democracy is a fascinating example of public effort devoted to research on political socialization, including what might be termed action research, and the development of numerous “sites of citizenship” across Europe that “facilitate the active participation of specific groups (often those socially excluded) in their own personal and community development, in decision-making processes and participative democracy” (Council of Europe 2003). In these sites, youth and adults alike are involved in what the Council of Europe calls the “management of public life” in projects whose design is informed by research. Although many of these sites are in the parts of Europe that have only recent experience with democracy, it is clear from these and other projects that even the “stable democracies” believe that the origins and development of people’s political views and action matter.

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DOWN'S AND TWO-PARTY CONVERGENCE

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Key Words political parties, political competition, divergence, rational choice, voter choice

■ **Abstract** We take as our starting point the insights of Downs (1957) into two-party competition. A careful reading of Downs offers a much more sophisticated and nuanced portrait of the factors affecting party differentiation than the simplistic notion that, in plurality elections, we ought to expect party convergence to the views of the median voter. Later scholars have built on Downsian ideas to see what happens vis-à-vis party differentiation when we modify key assumptions found in the basic Downsian spatial model. Recent work allows us to turn what is taken to be the Downsian view on its head: Although there are pressures in two-party competition for the two parties to converge, in general we should expect nonconvergence. Moreover, contra the negative portrait offered by Green & Shapiro (1994) of the limited or nonexistent value of research on party competition models in the Downsian tradition, we argue that, when viewed as a whole, neo-Downsian models—especially those of the past decade—do allow us to reconcile theory and data in terms of a multi-component theory of party competition with testable implications for comparative statics.

INTRODUCTION

The simple Downsian model of two-party competition under plurality is generally characterized as predicting party convergence to the policy position espoused by the median voter, and thus “Tweedledum-Tweedledee” political competition; yet this prediction violates empirical reality even for the United States, the country whose electoral politics provided the empirical inspiration for Downs’ work (Frendreis et al. 2003; Stonecash et al. 2003). For example, when a given constituency elects members of opposite parties (e.g., when a congressional seat changes hands to a member of the opposite party, or in states that are simultaneously represented by senators of opposite parties), the difference in voting records (as judged, say, by ADA scores) between the office-holders of different parties can be huge (Bullock & Brady 1983, Erikson & Wright 1997, Fiorina 1974, Grofman et al. 1990, Poole & Rosenthal 1984). This discrepancy between model and reality has led some scholars (e.g., Green & Shapiro 1994) to argue that rational choice modeling of party competition is empirically vacuous.

Yet the standard Downsian convergence result (Downs 1957) rests on more than a dozen specific assumptions, such as the assumptions that parties/candidates are motivated solely by office seeking and that voters choose solely on the basis of their policy proximity to candidates' positions. As this essay will show, when one or more of these assumptions is violated, the usual convergence result can often be expected to disappear. Moreover, we no longer get other unrealistic predictions from the Downsian approach, such as the expectation that elections would be decided by relatively narrow margins because candidates of the two parties would be identical in their only relevant attributes (i.e., their policy platforms or anticipated policy choices).

There have been a number of different approaches to accounting for candidate/party divergence in plurality-based elections. Often scholars seize upon one single explanatory factor. Our purpose here is not to provide new results but rather to provide a synthesis that reveals how a whole series of disparate results about divergence, especially recent results, can be integrated into a common framework to instruct us about which of the basic assumptions of the standard Downsian model should be replaced (see also Adams et al. 2004, especially Ch. 4; Grofman 1993, 1996). Almost any violation of the basic assumptions used by Downs to generate the two-party convergence result is likely to replace convergence with some degree of divergence in party positions.

The basic assumptions of the standard Downsian model are as follows:

1. There are only two political parties.
2. There is a single-round election for any office.
3. The election chooses a single candidate.
4. Elections take place within a single constituency.
5. The election is decided by a plurality vote.
6. Policies can be located along a single (left-right) dimension.
7. Candidate policy positions are well defined.
8. Candidate policy positions are accurately estimated by each voter.
9. Voters look no further than the next election.
10. Eligible voters go to the polls if the expected benefits of their vote's contribution to the election of the candidate for whom they would vote exceed the "costs" of voting.
- 11a. Voters care only about which candidate/party will enact policies closest to their preferences. They vote for the candidate closest to their own policy location.
- 11b. If there are no policy differences among the candidates/parties, then voters will be equally likely to support each of the candidates/parties.
12. Parties/candidates care only about winning.
13. Parties/candidates look no further than the next election.

14. Candidates/parties accurately estimate the policy preferences of voters, or at minimum, they can identify the location of the median voter overall and the median voter in each party.
15. Candidates are part of a unified party team.

By seeing what can happen to convergence when we replace one or more of the above assumptions with more realistic ones, we can assess how much convergence we might expect. Moreover, we can begin to identify the factors with the greatest impact on the degree of divergence (Adams et al. 2004). When we examine recent work modeling the forces that affect party convergence, we see that the standard view of the Downsian model as predicting convergence in two-party political competition gets it almost completely wrong. Yes, there are centripetal pressures; but in general they are partly or largely outweighed by the centrifugal ones, producing what my coauthors and I have labeled “spaced out politics” (Adams et al. 2004).

To simplify the exposition, this essay discusses the implications of violating individual assumptions while leaving other key assumptions intact. Although our focus is on two-party competition under plurality, and we take almost all of our illustrations from the United States, most of the ideas below are in no way restricted in their applicability to the United States, and may be extended to the multiparty-competition setting under various electoral systems (Adams et al. 2004).

MODIFYING ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STANDARD DOWNSIAN MODEL TO POTENTIALLY PERTURB THE CONVERGENCE RESULT

More Than Two Parties

The basic Downsian model posits the presence of only two parties. However, since Downs also posits plurality-based elections, assuming two parties may not be unrealistic. There is a strong theoretical argument—involving a psychological effect and a mechanical effect—that a system of plurality-based elections in single-member districts leads to two-party competition (Duverger 1959, 1986; cf. Riker 1982a). Yet, in real-world politics, plurality-based elections do not necessarily generate pure two-party competition, even at the district level (much less at the national level); only the United States nearly perfectly fits this prediction (see especially Gaines 1999). But in the United States, the two major parties often collude to adopt formal rules that hinder the entry of new parties. Also, in the United States, special factors (such as a presidential system based on state-specific electoral college outcomes) enhance the incentives for candidates to run under the label of one of the two major parties.

When we have more than two parties, even with plurality-based single-member district elections, the basic Downsian convergence argument no longer goes through. Until quite recently, modeling of multiparty competition with open entry either did

not find stable equilibria (convergent or otherwise) in terms of an expected number of parties and party locations, or derived empirically implausible results, e.g., for (almost) any location where a party is found, there is another party at the identical location (see reviews in Cox 1990 and Shepsle 1991; see also Enelow & Hinich 1984, 1990). However, recent work that allows for modifications of the standard Downsian simplifying assumptions has derived models of multiparty competition that fit empirical data quite well (see, e.g., Schofield et al. 1998a,b, and Adams et al. 2004 and references cited therein).

More Than One Round in the Election

The Downsian model assumes a single election. In the United States, partisan elections commonly involve a two-stage process: The primary election (or selection) picks the party nominees and the general election offers a choice between them. In many states, only the registered supporters of one party may vote to nominate that party's candidate. This two-stage closed primary process forces party divergence if party voters support the candidate in the primary who is closest to their own views and if parties are ideologically differentiated. Even if activists choose to vote for a candidate in the primary who they think can win, in preference to one who is more ideologically pure, they may not give the moderate candidate much else in the way of support. By focusing on parties as coalitions of voters rather than on voters as individuals we can provide one story that generates party divergence. The greater the mean policy differences between supporters of each of the two major parties, the greater the expected differences between the two candidates chosen by the primaries in these parties.

We can illustrate the basic intuition with a model due to McGann (2002). Assuming, for simplicity, two parties with nonoverlapping membership, McGann looks for a location such that the leftmost voter in the rightmost party is indifferent between the location of the median voter in his own party and the median voter in the other party (see Figure 1). To see how the McGann model works, consider a

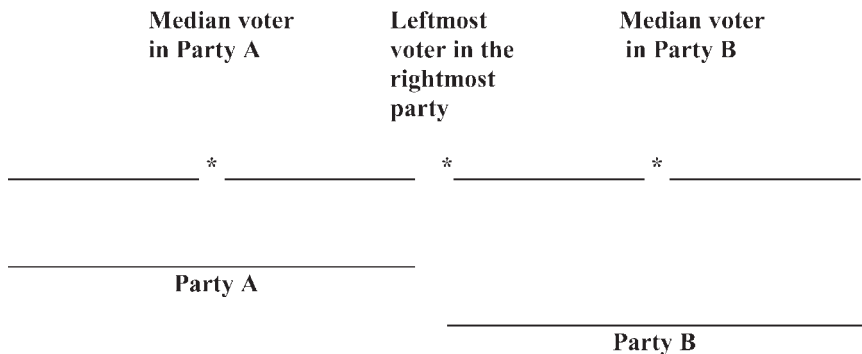


Figure 1 The McGann model of party differentiation.

uniform distribution of voter ideal points over the $[0, 1]$ interval. Where must the median voter in each of the two parties be located in order to achieve an equilibrium of the type described above? If the voter is located at x , for a uniform distribution, the median voter in his own party would be located at $0 + x/2$ and the median voter in the other party would be located at $x + (1 - x)/2$. Therefore, we set

$$x - x/2 = x + (1 - x)/2 - x.$$

Solving, we obtain $x = 1/2$, and so the two party medians are at $1/4$ and $3/4$. For virtually all distributions, we find that, under the McGann model, two parties will always be differentiated in a way that resembles what Merrill & Grofman (1999a) call “moderate extremism.” [A closely related model has been offered by economists Osborne & Tourky (unpublished manuscript, 2002).]

Two-stage electoral processes create an important check on the centripetal forces identified by Downs even if voters (and candidates) see the two stages as intertwined. Unidimensional two-party competition in an electoral system with both a primary election and a general election gives rise to party divergence if we posit that the ideological position that a candidate claims in the primary is the one he or she is stuck with in the general election as well (cf. Bernhardt & Ingberman 1985), so that candidates must seek positions that will win them *both* elections. It also generates divergence if voters have policy preferences that lead them to maximize expected benefits, i.e., if voters not only consider the desirability of a given candidate of their own party (relative to that of the candidate of the opposite party) but also consider that candidate’s apparent likelihood of winning the general election. In a two-stage electoral process (nomination plus general), the extent of between-party divergence is conditioned by the underlying nature of the distribution of voter ideal points and the assumptions we make about how voters are aggregated into parties.

These points are central to two models of two-party divergence offered in the early 1970s (Aranson & Ordeshook 1972; Coleman 1971, 1972) that have largely been neglected ever since. Both these models generate predictions that the location of the candidates chosen by the primaries in each party will be somewhere between the party median and the overall median (cf. Cooper & Munger 2000).

Aranson & Ordeshook (1972) make candidate choices the focus of their modeling. In their model, voters (both in the primary and in the general) always vote for the candidate closest to them, but candidates are assumed to develop expectations about the probability of victory in the primary election (P_1) and the general election (P_2) as a function of the policy position they adopt, and are posited to choose a spatial location that maximizes $P_1 \times P_2$.

In contrast, the Coleman (1971, 1972) model focuses on voter motivations. In the Coleman model, some or all voters in the primary election care not only about the candidates’ policy positions but also about the victor’s ability to win the general election, and these voters choose among candidates accordingly. Roughly speaking, Coleman assumed that voters maximize a function that can be thought of as the benefit derived from selecting a party representative whose location is close

to their own ideal point discounted by the likelihood that such a candidate will be elected in the general election. The Coleman model has been further extended by Owen & Grofman (1995), who show that the degree of divergence is linked to the degree of kurtosis in the ideological distributions of the two parties.

In a two-stage electoral process (nomination plus general), the extent of between-party divergence is also affected by the exact nature of the party nominating process. For example, Gerber & Morton (1998) and Grofman & Brunell (2001) show evidence that increasing the openness of primaries reduces the ideological differentiation between the two parties (see also various essays in Cain & Gerber 2002). The presence of a voter “wish-fulfillment” bias (Granberg & Brent 1980) may also enhance the impact of primaries on divergence of political competition. Consider, for example, the belief of Barry Goldwater’s Republican supporters in 1964 that there was a “conservative majority” available for mobilization by a candidate expressing the “right” views (cf. Uhlaner & Grofman 1986).

More Than One Candidate Chosen Simultaneously

The Downsian assumption that a single election chooses a single candidate is not always applicable. With multiple elections for different offices within single-member district constituencies, voters may choose to “policy balance” across different elections, seeking to elect an implicit “slate” that is closest to the voters’ own policies. Fiorina (1992, 1996) and Alesina & Rosenthal (1995) argue that voters ticket-split in order to elect a “set” of officials that is more likely to achieve policies preferred by the voter. For example, if slightly left-of-center voters who generally support Democratic candidates see (or expect to see) a Democrat in the White House, they may now wish to vote for a conservative Republican for the House of Representatives in an attempt to move overall policies slightly to the right, closer to their ideal point than would be obtained were the federal government unified under either a Democratic (leftist) or a Republican (rightist) regime. If voters “balance” across elections, then there may be support for nonmedian parties to counterbalance other nonmedian parties. The balancing literature has not yet satisfactorily established how to discern what set of elections voters are supposed to be balancing over, and how voters weight the results in the different electoral arenas.

More Than One Constituency

For plurality-based elections, Austen-Smith (1984) performed one of the earliest examinations of the implications of concurrent competition in multiple constituencies for two-party unidimensional competition under the Downsian model. But assumptions other than those used by Austen-Smith can lead to different conclusions, especially once we recognize that the location of the median voter will differ across constituencies, so that no single party position is optimal in all constituencies. Assume each party’s candidates must take the same position as their national party. Now, were the national party to stake out a policy position designed to make very likely wins for its candidates in some constituencies, while largely conceding

a portion of the other constituencies to their opponents, parties could be assured that, no matter how unfavorable general circumstances might be (e.g., a scandal or being blamed for poor economic performance) there would always be some seats so safe that they would remain in party hands regardless of electoral tides.

Election Not Plurality-Based

In modeling party competition, we need to understand how many parties we ought to expect and where they are. Shifting from plurality to, say, list proportional representation (PR) will certainly change the incentives for party entry. In general, for PR elections we expect greater incentives for multiparty competition than under plurality (Duverger 1959, 1986; Taagepera & Shugart 1989). Party proliferation under a given electoral rule is linked to the “threshold of exclusion” of that rule, i.e., the largest size that a party can be and still be denied seats (Lijphart & Gibberd 1977, Loosemore & Hanby 1971). The threshold of exclusion is expressed as a function of the number of representatives elected from each district (i.e., in terms of what is commonly called district magnitude). In general, the more parties there are, the greater the expected ideological range of party locations. However, whether electoral systems have a further independent effect on party convergence once we control for both the distribution of voter ideal points and the number of parties remains an open area of investigation (see, e.g., McGann et al. 2002).

More Than One Policy Dimension

The basic Downsian model locates policy platforms along a single (left-right) dimension. One obvious way to extend the Downsian model is to consider multiple dimensions of issue competition.

A generally neglected aspect of Downs’ (1957) work, highly relevant to party divergence, is the possibility of putting together winning coalitions based on minority groups with intense preferences on particular issue dimensions. Relatedly, Petrocik (1996) has emphasized that, in the United States, certain issues have come to be “owned” by one party, i.e., that party is more credible in claiming positions on the issue. For example, Republicans are more credible in claiming to be anticrime, whereas Democrats are more credible in claiming to be concerned about affordable health care. In multidimensional issue competition, parties may compete not by converging to similar positions but, rather, by emphasizing the importance/salience of the distinct issues which give them the advantage with the voters (Feld & Grofman 2001; Hammond & Humes 1993; M. Humphreys & J. Garry, unpublished article). Perhaps the central finding of the largest cross-national study of party platforms, the Party Manifestos Project, is that “parties compete by accentuating issues on which they have an undoubted advantage, rather than by putting forward contrasting policies on the same issues” (Budge et al. 1987, p. 391; see also Budge & Fairlie 1983). Wagemans (2001), following Budge & Fairlie (1983), calls this a “salience theory” model of party competition. One implication of salience theory is that parties will appear to diverge, since there is no reason to expect that

the optimal campaign strategies of both parties will emphasize winning the votes of the same groups of voters or appealing to the same interest groups.

In most neo-Downsian models of party location, the predicted relative magnitude of the centripetal and centrifugal forces that affect party location varies with the assumptions we make about the underlying dimensionality of the issue space. It matters considerably whether we seek to model convergence in a single dimension or assume a multidimensional issue space. Equilibrium results are much easier to generate in the unidimensional case. For multidimensional issues spaces, most models of the 1970s and 1980s predicted instability (see, e.g., McKelvey 1976, Riker 1982b). But longitudinal patterns of party competition in most countries in the Party Manifestos data set (Budge et al. 1987) do not resemble random walks over issue space, nor do they look like convergence to the center of the ideological space (e.g., near the generalized median). Rather, each party seems to confine itself to a relatively small section of the issue space, usually one distinct from those of other parties. In the United States, even when we measure multiple dimensions, we still get nonconvergence. For example, as part of the European Party Manifestos Project (Budge et al. 1987), when Robertson generated a two-dimensional factor-analysis-generated issue space for the United States, 1948–1980, based on party platforms, the Democratic and Republican Parties remained in distinct areas of that issue space (Robertson 1987: Figure 3.1, p. 69).

Because our focus is on unidimensional two-party competition, we do not review recent work on multidimensional multiparty competition here. We would, however, call the reader's attention to work on the "heart" by Schofield and colleagues (e.g., Schofield 1996, Schofield et al. 1998a,b); to work by Laver & Shepsle (1994, 1996) on choice over a multidimensional lattice that builds on Shepsle's earlier work on the partitioning of multidimensional issues into a sequence of (orthogonal) unidimensional choices (see, e.g., Shepsle 1979, Shepsle & Weingast 1981); to Shvetsova (2002); and to the modeling efforts of Adams and Merrill (see especially Adams et al. 2004).

Ambiguous Policy Positions of Candidates

A candidate can blur his policies to appear more centrist than they really are. Early work by Shepsle (1970) dealt with the consequences for candidate success of taking ambiguous stands. Bowler (1990), Page (1976), and Husted et al. (1995) worked along closely related lines. In general, we would expect the potential for candidate ambiguity to allow greater candidate differentiation (see especially Aragones & Neeman 2000). In particular, Berger et al. (2000) offer a two-candidate model in which, if voters are uncertain, but one candidate is of lower variance in expected policy location than the other, we expect some degree of divergence of equilibrium policy platforms. Even if there is no explicit attempt at deception, platforms may be "noisy," with many voters incorrectly assessing candidate locations; even such "random" misperceptions can affect optimal party strategies (Calvert 1985, Lagerlöf 2003, Roemer 1994).

Votes Based on Perceived Characteristics of Each Party's Support Collections

Undecided voters pay attention to the characteristics of the supporters of each candidate/party. They may choose not to vote for parties whose supporters are types of voters (or interest groups) they do not like. In other words, party competition may be based on voters' closeness to the set of voters whom they expect to be in each candidate's support coalition (Glazer et al. 1989; cf. Aldrich 1983, Aldrich & McGinnis 1989). Under these assumptions, party positions may diverge (Owen & Grofman 1995).

Also, as noted above, because, for historical or other reasons, parties may be differentially credible with different groups (e.g., antiabortion activists or strong feminists), there is no reason to expect that different interest groups will contribute equally to each party. Although concern for "access" may tilt contributions toward the party in power, *ceteris paribus*, each group will tend to give more funding to the party whose candidates are more likely to sympathize with its cause. If money and direct campaign support translate into votes, then the existence of such differential contribution bases leads to policy divergence (cf. Miller & Schofield 2003).

Voters Look Beyond the Next Election

A complication suggested by Downs himself that would lead to a greater role for the policy positions of party supporters is the possibility of "extremist" voters choosing not to vote for the candidates of the party they would otherwise support if they feel it has become too centrist. Often voters of an extreme ideological point of view may take policy concerns more seriously than more centrist voters. One way extremist voters might choose to punish a party that has moved too far from them is to vote for a candidate of a minor party with no possibility of winning whose policy positions they admire. Such behavior on the part of extremist voters is often intended to scare a party into returning to a more ideologically pure position by highlighting the importance of support from the party's most ideologically committed members. On the other hand, K. Shotts (unpublished manuscript) has recently turned this argument on its head by showing that voters who are moderate (relative to the set of party loyalists) may also wish to abstain in order to force their party away from extreme positions. However, we suspect policy-oriented abstention is a more likely strategy for extremists than for moderates.

Turnout Does Not Depend on Voting Costs Versus Expected Benefits

The standard Downsian model holds that voters go to the polls if the expected benefits of their vote's contribution to the election of their preferred candidate exceed the "costs" of voting. Instead or in addition, voters may abstain if the choice closest to their policy position is too far away. According to Downs, if the ideological distribution of voters is bimodal and if abstention by extremists is

practiced, “a two-party system need not lead to the convergence on moderation that Hotelling and Smithies predicted” (Downs 1957, p. 118). There have been several attempts to make this intuition more precise, beginning with Garvey (1966). The most extensive work in this area is by Adams (2001b, Adams & Merrill 2003; see also Adams et al. 2004). The basic idea is simply that voters who are alienated from politics because no candidate is close to their preferred position might choose to abstain. This may happen even if voters are not seeking to influence the party’s future behavior. If parties fear abstention by party loyalists, that fear may push them back toward the median voter in the party and away from the overall median voter.

Even if they do vote, if campaign activists’ support (e.g., donated time and money) is critical to electoral success, then activists’ lack of enthusiasm for candidates whose positions diverge from the party median can force a party’s candidates to move away from the overall median voter in the constituency. Because of their potential contributions of money and time and their threat of nonparticipation (even if implicit), we can expect that ideologically extreme supporters of a party, from whose ranks activists are disproportionately drawn, will exert more influence on the policy location of their party’s candidates than other voters (Aldrich 1983).

Candidate Policy Location Does Not Determine Voter Support

GENERAL BIASES LEAD VOTERS TO SUPPORT A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE Instead of caring only about which candidate/party will enact policies closest to the preferences of the voter, voters have general biases that lead them to support particular candidates (e.g., incumbents or candidates perceived as particularly competent or trustworthy) as long as the candidates of the opposite party are not too much closer to the voter’s own preferred position(s). Nonpolicy concerns were introduced into the voter calculus by various authors, perhaps most notably Enelow & Hinich (1982; see also various essays in Enelow & Hinich 1984, 1990). If nonpolicy factors give one party an edge, this can have important implications for party differentiation. One example of this line of work is Feld & Grofman’s (1991) effort to model the nature and effects of incumbency advantage.

Feld & Grofman (1991) posit a bias in favor of the incumbent such that a voter sympathetic to that incumbent will not vote for another candidate unless the (foreseen) policy positions of the rival candidate are substantially closer to the voter, i.e., voters give the incumbent a “benefit of the doubt.” Feld & Grofman show that, if the candidate who enjoys the benefit of the doubt is vulnerable at all, the only locations that can defeat him are ones that are nonidentical to his own. Indeed, the greater the benefit of the doubt, the further away must be any location that can defeat the incumbent. They show that if the benefit of the doubt is great enough, or if there is a very large benefit of the doubt from a relatively small set of randomly distributed voters (e.g., as a result of constituent services provided to a random subset of the voters), then a centrally located incumbent can become invulnerable to defeat even though, without benefit of the doubt, the voting game

would lack a core.¹ Under these circumstances, a candidate who is more extreme than the median preference in the electorate can nonetheless be reelected because of a combination of nonpolicy considerations and benefit of the doubt.

Another model of what happens when voters incorporate nonpolicy considerations is by Enelow & Munger (1993). They show that differences in candidate reputation can lead to nonconvergence of optimum candidate locations (see also Bernhardt & Ingberman 1985). Recent work (e.g., Adams et al. 2004, Groseclose 2001, MacDonald & Rabinowitz 1998) has confirmed the general result that nonpolicy considerations in voter decision making will often lead to a stable pattern of party divergence.

M. McDonald (personal communication, 1999) makes the closely related point that, when the electorate is highly partisan, candidates will exhibit divergence because they can do so with little loss in their probability of winning. As the electorate becomes less partisan, then the candidates will track the median voter more closely.

PARTISAN BIAS LEADS VOTERS TO SUPPORT THEIR “OWN” PARTY Above we have considered how candidate-specific nonpolicy factors may affect divergence; now we turn to party-based effects. Instead of caring only about which candidate/party will enact policies closest to the preferences of the voter, voters have partisan biases that lead them to support candidates of their “own” party as long as the candidates of the opposite party are not too much closer to the voters’ own most preferred positions. For example, it makes sense to think of party supporters as developing a degree of brand loyalty, based on past party performance (Fiorina 1981), previously staked-out party positions (Shepsle 1991, pp. 42–43), or generationally linked patterns of partisan loyalty. It is easy to imagine situations in which this partisan loyalty induces a bias in voter choice (Grofman 1987) similar to what Feld & Grofman (1991) posit in the nature of incumbency effects. Adams (2000, 2001a,b; Adams et al. 2004; Merrill & Adams 2001; cf. Lindbeck & Weibull 1993) shows that, when voters prefer the candidate of their own party to that of the other party as long as their own party’s candidate is not substantially further away from them (in policy terms) than is the opposing candidate, such bias can induce policy divergence.

VOTERS’ CHOICE ANTICIPATES POLICY CHANGE Instead of caring only about which candidate/party will enact policies closest to their preferences, voters may base their choice on the direction in which candidates will take policies, or on discounted expectations of policy change. Largely motivated by the theoretical and empirical difficulties with the Downsian proximity model, an alternative spatial model of voter choice, the directional model, has recently been proposed by Rabinowitz et al. (Listhaug et al. 1994a,b, MacDonald et al. 1991, Rabinowitz & MacDonald 1989). The intuition underlying this approach is that “voters do not have preferences for particular policies; they simply have general preferences

¹A “core” is a solution that would give rise to no further incentives for any party to move.

for the *direction* they would like policies to go” (Macdonald et al. 1991, p. 25, emphasis added). Voters choose the party that will move policies in a direction that is closest to the direction of change desired by the voter. The Rabinowitz & MacDonald model is defined in terms of directional change from a neutral (zero) point on the issue dimension(s).

The choices made by voters choosing directionally need not be identical with those of voters choosing on the basis of policy proximity, although, at least for two-party competition, for most voters, the two models are likely to yield identical predictions. The Rabinowitz & Macdonald model can be shown to imply that parties will take noncentral positions (Merrill 1993, Rabinowitz & Macdonald 1989) even when elections are plurality-based. Because the pure form of the directional model has some unrealistic implications (Merrill 1993), attempts have been made to modify it to incorporate Downsian proximity elements (Iversen 1994; Merrill 1993; Merrill & Grofman 1997a,b, 1998, 1999a). Such a unified model tends to lead to limited divergence.

Another spatial variant (Grofman 1985) is premised on the idea that voters discount promises made in party platforms based on the expected actual movement from the status quo that is likely to be achieved were a particular candidate/party to achieve office. Grofman’s model emphasizes the importance of the location of the status quo point in shaping voter choices—something totally neglected in the standard proximity model—but its logic is otherwise consistent with that of the standard proximity model. Like the Rabinowitz & MacDonald directional model, the discounting model has the property that, even in one dimension, optimal party strategies need not be convergent. However, in unidimensional two-party competition, it predicts moderate divergence rather than extreme divergence (Merrill & Grofman 1997b, 1999a). Grofman’s model has been shown (Merrill & Grofman 1999a) to be a special case of the mixed directional and proximity model offered by Iversen (1994) and has recently been incorporated into models with nonpolicy components by Adams et al. (2004).

Candidate Policy Location Does Dictate Voter Support, But Voting is Probabilistic

It is possible that even if voters do care only about which candidate/party will enact policies closest to their preferences, voters choose probabilistically rather than deterministically. “Probabilistic voting” means that a given party is not chosen with either probability zero or probability one, depending on relative proximity to the voter’s ideal point; instead, the likelihood that a voter will choose a party is some (monotonic) function of how much closer that party’s policy location is to the voter than the position(s) of the other party(ies). Hinich (1977) provides a model of two-party competition under probabilistic voting in which parties converge to the mean voter location rather than the location of the median voter. It appears to be much easier to get equilibrium results under probabilistic voting than under the more usual deterministic approach (Adams et al. 2004). Moreover, not all probabilistic

models of two-party competition yield convergence. For example, Cox (1987) provides a probabilistic model of two-party unidimensional competition in which rational vote-seeking politicians have an incentive to avoid coming together at the median (see also Adams et al. 2004, Cox 1990, Eaton & Lipsey 1975).

Voters Inaccurately Estimate the Policy Platforms of Candidates/Parties

The standard assumption is that voters accurately estimate the policy platforms of candidates/parties. Instead, systematic perceptual biases lead to projection effects. There is a limited but important literature on perceptual bias in voter choice (among the most important works are Granberg & Brent 1980, Granberg & Holmberg 1988, Markus & Converse 1979, Page & Jones 1979). The basic idea is simple: Voters who have preferences for candidates/parties rationalize those preferences by two kinds of projection effects. On the one hand, they assimilate the position of favored alternatives, bringing them closer to their own views, and on the other hand, they contrast the views of disfavored alternatives by projecting them further away than they actually are. In general, such effects will allow greater party differentiation (Adams et al. 2004, Ch. 10; Merrill et al. 2001).

Parties/Candidates Care About Policy, Not Just About Winning

We may expect that parties/candidates have policy-oriented concerns of their own, just as voters/activists do, and are not solely concerned with winning elections. If candidates have policy preferences, we would expect to see a self-selection into the ranks of candidates of each party that mirrors the policy stances of voters of that party but is even more extreme. For two-party competition, the role of party activists, when combined with primaries and with the importance of durable “party images,” virtually guarantees a self-selection and weeding-out process in which candidates gravitate to and are chosen by the party whose policy positions most resemble their own.

Chappell & Keech (1986), Cox (1984), Hansen & Stuart (1984), Holler (1978), and Wittman (1973, 1977, 1983), among others, have modeled two-party (unidimensional) competition as one in which parties (or candidates), rather than merely seeking a vote-maximizing location as in the classical Hotelling-Downs framework, trade off the probability of their winning an election against the achievement of personally or collectively desired policy goals. Wittman (1990) provides a thorough review of this formal modeling work up through the 1980s. He shows that assuming candidate and party policy preferences (and not just voter policy preferences) gives us much more realistic expectations about likely party divergence. In particular, if candidates have policy positions typical of voters in their own party, then we would expect some degree of party divergence [see reviews in Enelow & Hinich (1984), various essays in Enelow & Hinich (1990) and Hermsen (1991), and the recent work of Roemer (2001) and Adams et al. (2004, Ch. 11–12) for other work along similar lines].

J. Harrington (unpublished paper, 1993) offers an interesting model of what happens when we permit candidates to have both policy and vote-maximizing concerns. He models the behavior of a universe with both ideologues and office seekers in it. Depending on the ability of the voters to acquaint themselves with past positions of candidates, the process of competition can favor either office-seeking politicians or politicians who behave in a consistent ideological fashion. In most variations of the Harrington model, candidates of the “wrong” type are eventually driven from the political arena.

Candidates/Parties Look Beyond the Next Election

The seminal work on longer-run strategic considerations is that of Budge (1994), who considers a range of options for parties that are seeking to position themselves for long-term success, especially after experiencing failure (see also Wagemans 2001). Perhaps the most important recent work along these lines dealing with the United States is Finegold & Swift (2001). When parties are looking past a single election, the repertoire of responses is more complex than looking for a winning centrist location. It can include the option of introducing new issues that can eventually cause a split in the present majority coalition (Riker 1982b).

Also, parties may be playing a game of entry deterrence. There may be incentives for tacit collusion between two parties to prevent entry of a third (centrist) party that will eclipse them both. Brams (1980) shows that, in a single dimension, for certain distributional assumptions about voters’ ideological preferences, entry deterrence may give rise to parties located at the first and third quartiles of the voter distribution; Palfrey (1984) has similar but somewhat more general results.

If candidates are playing a long-run game in which they expect to contest for higher office, and if constituencies differ in the location of their median voter and scrutiny will expose a candidate’s past record, then the optimal position for a politician need not be at the median voter location in the constituency he or she *presently* represents. UCLA Professor Richard Anderson, a former congressional staffer, has suggested that many members of the US House of Representatives position themselves in advance with an eye toward an eventual run for the senate (R. Anderson, personal communication, 1994). This idea has been supported by the work of Frances et al. (1994), who find that members of the House with career ambitions to become US senators begin to shift toward the position of their party’s senator 13 years before they run for Senate (see also Schmidt et al. 1996).

Only a few formal models of party competition take a longitudinal perspective. Page et al. (1992) use a genetic algorithm to model the behavior of adaptive parties, optimizing in a sequentially responsive fashion. They find what we would characterize as a “slow waltz” of convergence to centrist policies (see also Merrill & Grofman 1999b, Ch. 10). On the other hand, Alesina (1988) offers a model in which sequential competition with a discounted time horizon can lead parties to offer divergent platforms. Over time, if incumbents are reelected, a divergence between the incumbent position and that of the electorate can arise as the latter

shifts but the former does not. Also relevant is the work of Grofman (1985), which suggests how party divergence may shift with shifts in the location of the status quo. As noted above, Grofman assumes that voters locate not only the candidates and themselves but also the status quo, and then decide which candidate to prefer based on where that candidate can be expected to move the status quo (a discounted function of the platform position each candidate espouses). Because the status quo changes over time, in the Grofman model we can have changes in voter choices without any changes in voter preferences.

Candidates/Parties Inaccurately Estimate the Policy Preferences of Voters

Various authors have looked at what happens when candidates are unsure of voters' policy locations, but when uncertainty is random, the effects on convergence will be minimal to nonexistent (see, e.g., Glazer et al. 1989). However, just as systematic biases may affect voters' estimations of parties' locations, systematic biases may well influence candidate/party perceptions of where their supporters are and/or of where the median voter might be located. In particular, we might expect a wish-fulfillment effect, in which candidates overestimate their congruence to the electorate. This effect will tend to support party divergence. A wish-fulfillment effect for a party losing votes should be particularly pronounced when there have been major changes in voter attitudes. This is exactly what P. Norris & J. Lovenduski (unpublished manuscript, 2001) find for a recent British election.

Candidates Are Not Part of a Unified Party Team

Instead of being part of a unified party team, as the standard Downsian model assumes, candidates of a given party may adapt their platforms to local constituencies—constituencies with differing local medians. We have already looked at what may happen when candidates offer policies identical to those offered by their party's candidates in other constituencies. As a variable, the importance of multiple constituencies interacts with the variables of consistency of party positions across constituencies and the degree to which constituencies differ in the location of their median voter. If candidates of a given party are free to change their position to make it attractive to the median voter in the constituency in which they are competing (e.g., in the United States, Democrats in the South running as conservatives), then polarization between the parties may be mitigated. A. Wuffle (personal communication, 1990) calls this a "rubber band effect"—the candidates of each party, though for the most part tethered to the national position of their party, may have some freedom of movement, so that, within any given constituency, they would tend to resemble one another more than they resemble some candidates of their own party in other constituencies (see Ansolabehere et al. 2001, Grofman et al. 2000).

However, when constituencies differ in the location of their median voter, the candidates *elected from* each party might have different platforms even if the candidates *nominated by* each party presented nearly identical positions within

any given constituency. Because of association with national party images, the candidate associated with the more liberal party is likely to be advantaged in liberal constituencies, whereas the candidate of the more conservative party is advantaged in more conservative constituencies (Grofman et al. 2000; cf. Esaiasson 1999: Table 6.1, p. 120). Thus, *ceteris paribus*, in the United States, liberal constituencies are more likely to elect Democrats and conservative constituencies are more likely to elect Republicans. But then, as judged by its visible spokespersons, the Democratic Party will be a party on the left and the Republican Party a party on the right, reinforcing voter perceptions of ideological divergence and guaranteeing that the divergence will persist (Grofman et al. 2000).

In the United States, this pattern of ideological party polarization was slow to emerge because of the lingering complication of Civil War attitudes, which kept the conservative South solidly supporting the Democrats despite the gradual leftward shift of the national Democratic Party. But, once racial considerations and attitudes about government pushed conservative southerners in the same direction—after a Democratic president (Lyndon Johnson) successfully pressed for passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and a Republican president (Ronald Reagan) made the sunbelt his key to victory—we saw a substantial increase in party polarization (Grofman et al. 2001, Miller & Schofield 2003, Poole & Rosenthal 1997, Stonecash et al. 2003).

SUMMARY

In general, there are both centripetal and centrifugal forces at work in electoral competition. In this essay, our focus has been on two-party competition under plurality voting. Having identified the ancillary assumptions of the Downsian model giving rise to two-party convergence, we have demonstrated that even limited changes in any of these assumptions can be sufficient to make the convergence result go away. In recognizing the complicating factors identified above, contra the classic comic-book version of Downs (but not contra Downs himself), we would expect that, under plurality, candidates will in general be much closer to the median voter in their own party than to the overall median voter, but will be shifted somewhat toward the views of potential swing voters. This is exactly what the U.S. evidence shows (Grofman et al. 1990, Poole & Rosenthal 1984, Shapiro et al. 1990).

Attempts have been made to modify the simple Downsian model that predicts convergence of policy positions in two-party plurality-based electoral competition to make it compatible with evidence that parties in the United States (and elsewhere) are not Tweedledum-Tweedledee. Green & Shapiro (1994) view these attempts as, in effect, analogous to the attempts to modify the misguided Ptolemaic notion of a circular orbit of the planets around the Earth by piling epicycles on epicycles so as to “prevent” the model from being rejected by the data. I disagree. Work by scholars who have built on Downsian ideas, pursuing what I have come to call the “neo-Downsian agenda,” allows us to build toward an institution-specific

and voter preference-distribution-specific theory of party competition that does have testable implications when judged in terms of comparative statics. That is, we can identify factors that will have a predictable effect in either fostering or hindering party convergence. By organizing those factors in terms of the assumptions used to generate the basic Downsian convergence result, this essay provides a convenient framework to summarize and synthesize several decades of research, both formal and empirical, on neo-Downsian spatial models of two-party competition (see also Adams et al. 2004, Ch. 4).

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“BUSINESS” IS NOT AN INTEREST GROUP: On the Study of Companies in American National Politics

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Key Words corporations, lobbying, institutions, strategy, government affairs

■ **Abstract** Individual companies are neglected in American politics scholarship, despite their empirical and normative significance. Interest group theory does not provide an adequate framework for understanding them. Neoclassical microeconomic theory has begun to be developed for political analysis, but its assumptions restrict the scope of its utility. Cyert & March’s (1992) “behavioral theory of the firm” provides a more promising foundation, one that dovetails with the historical and institutional tradition in political science. Research in this tradition has begun to analyze how the personal preferences of senior managers, institutional structures, cultural norms, and learning over time affect the political positions and strategies of firms.

INTRODUCTION: THE BUSINESS OF WASHINGTON

The main business of Washington, DC is business. While dramatic issues of war, scandal, and injustice capture the headlines, the day-to-day efforts of Congressional staffers, Supreme Court clerks, and executive branch bureaucrats tend to be absorbed by mundane issues that affect cost, price, and market share. The emphasis on business in our nation’s capital is even more pronounced outside of the halls of government. Organized nongovernmental interests in Washington overwhelmingly consist of firms and their agents.

If the business of Washington is business, the business of American politics scholarship is anything but. Students of interest groups, in particular, tend to concentrate much more on organizations like the Christian Coalition and Common Cause than those like General Electric and General Motors, which are not “groups” at all. Even research on business in American politics centers on groups, especially encompassing business organizations, rather than individual firms. Though important, these organizations are exceptional. As Smith (2000) shows, issues that unite the bulk of American businesses under the banners of encompassing groups “occur only rarely.” Many issues are particular to a few firms or even a single one. Such

issues motivate firms to represent themselves in Washington and to provide resources for and exert substantial control over an array of other entities—including trade associations, coalitions, political consultants, lawyer-lobbyists, public relations specialists, and think tanks—that operate on their behalf.

The problem is qualitative as well as quantitative. There are too few studies of individual firms in American politics in part because the theoretical apparatus of the interest groups field does not fit them very well. Our theories tend to generate questions that lead us away from studying the most distinctive aspects of firms' political attitudes and behavior. The government affairs function of a large corporation has very different incentives and decision-making processes than those that characterize the ideal-typical voluntary association of citizens that occupies the core of most theories of interest groups, Olson's (1965) above all.

Two nascent threads of research aim to redress this deficiency. One approach extends the Olsonian microeconomic tradition, treating firms as unitary rational actors. Although I welcome further efforts in this direction, this approach has important weaknesses and ought not to be the only one employed by political scientists. A more promising but even less developed approach draws on historical and institutional scholarship in political science and sociology. It focuses on "processes of information and communication" (Bauer et al. 1972) both within firms and across their boundaries.

This essay seeks to encourage scholarship on individual businesses in American politics, particularly historical and institutional scholarship. I begin by substantiating the empirical importance of the subject. I then review the mismatch between received interest group theory and the political operations of businesses, emphasizing mobilization, preference formation, and strategic choice. The next section briefly assesses microeconomic research in this area. The largest portion of the paper is devoted to explicating the historical and institutional approach, highlighting recent work that has laid a foundation for further research. I conclude by identifying high priorities for scholars who would build on that foundation.

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS "BUSINESS": THE EMPIRICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CORPORATE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Democratic theory provides ample justification for studying firms, but the justification developed here is simpler and grounded in raw empiricism. Individual companies are represented in American national politics in large numbers. They are doing something, and we ought to learn what and why. We cannot do so merely by studying peak associations or even trade associations, much less interest groups in general.

Interest group scholars have long concurred that "business" has an advantage in the "pressure system." Baumgartner & Leech's (1998) survey of the field traces research that supports this view back to the 1920s. Like many analysts, they add the Washington representatives of individual companies to those of business

associations to show that “business” comprises at least half, and probably substantially more, of all interest organizations active at the national level. Baumgartner & Leech do not note in this context that companies usually outnumber associations in the studies they discuss, even in Schlozman & Tierney’s (1986) weighted sample of interest organizations, in which one might expect companies to be underrepresented. Some studies of interest groups, including Walker’s (1991) two major surveys, systematically exclude firms (and other institutions such as state governments and universities) from their sampling frames.

It seems likely that the balance between firms and business associations in the national interest organization population has changed over time. Several accounts (Harris 1989, Marcus & Irion 1987, Vogel 1989) identify the 1970s as a period of explosive growth in corporate government affairs organizations, and their growth seems to have continued at a more modest pace at least into the 1980s. Working in the 1940s and 1950s, Truman (1951) and Bauer et al. (1972) could reasonably equate pressure groups with business associations, but that equation is obsolete. Data compiled by Baumgartner & Leech (2001) from reports made in 1996 under the Lobbying Disclosure Act clinch the point. Individual firms formed a substantial plurality of both interest organizations (41% of reports) and clients of lobbying firms (44%) in that year, and they reported more spending on lobbying than all other types of organizations combined (56%). It is likely that such measurements underestimate the involvement of companies and other institutions in public policy relative to other interest organizations, because companies typically have resources outside the capital that they draw on and other organizations often do not.

Of course, firms and associations are interconnected and may well work toward the same ends. Several scholarly traditions, in fact, view the profusion of business political organizations as little more than foam that obscures a sea of business unity. Some who take this position, both Marxists and non-Marxists, focus on the “instruments” (notably interlocking boards of directors) that allow business leaders to align their preferences and implement joint strategies (Domhoff 1996, Mills 1956). Another strand of thought (Block 1987, Hacker & Pierson 2002, Lindblom 1977) concentrates on “structural” power, particularly the threat of capital flight, which allows “business” to achieve its ends without having to resort to conventional political activity.

The business unity perspective, in any variant, provides useful insights into the broad outlines of American politics. The norms maintained by C. Wright Mills’ “power elite” probably help to keep radical proposals off the policy agenda, even when the public mood might be receptive to them. Federal policy makers surely do moderate their positions from time to time in order to avoid scaring investors. However, this perspective is often exaggerated and far from exhaustive. Business unity is more unusual than scholars in this tradition claim, and neither instrumental nor structural power is typically wielded with the force that they assert. Although “business” may want lower taxes, when real choices about who will pay how much get made, the united front tends to crumble. Most of the time, there simply is no such thing as “business” in American politics (Vogel 1987).

The same argument applies to the literature on peak associations: It provides at best a partial understanding of the role of businesses in American politics. Even Smith (2000), whose recent study of the US Chamber of Commerce sets a high standard in this area, emphasizes that businesses are more likely to exercise power on narrow, obscure issues than the salient, conflictual issues on which he concentrates. Polsby (1980) reaches a similar conclusion. Many issues related to taxation, regulation, trade, and appropriations, for instance, are simply too narrow to warrant the attention of peak associations.

Studies of other sorts of business political organizations, such as industry associations, could help to fill this gap. Such organizations often take up issues that pit one group of businesses against another or that are raised by state or societal actors but are significant to only a fraction of all businesses. This genre, however, has gone out of style, with the occasional exception of studies of particular issues or processes (e.g., Bosso 1987, Derthick & Quirk 1985) that contain chapters that explore relevant business associations.

Hart (2003) suggests that permanent business associations can be arranged along a continuum. At one pole are associations that are like citizen groups—composed of many members, each contributing a small amount—and are largely staff-driven. The other pole is characterized by associations comprising a relatively small number of larger businesses, which use the associations to coordinate their activities on issues of common concern and to act on their behalf. No survey distinguishes between these types of associations. Olson (1965) claims that the latter predominate. Leech's 1995 sample of 221 trade associations, on the other hand, had a mean of over 5000 members and a median of 240 (BL Leech, personal communication).

Yet, the policy activities of associations with large numbers of members may nonetheless be controlled by a small number of large companies. Although large firms may gain leverage by paying a disproportionate share of association dues, the relationship often goes well beyond mere check writing. Government affairs executives usually view "association management" as a major responsibility and allocate staff time to it. Firm representatives use associations as venues in which to create, shape, implement, and—not least—block political strategies. One cannot thoroughly understand the workings of many industry associations without understanding how large member firms operate.

We need to study individual firms, then, to understand their impact on collective activity. We also need to study them in order to understand how and why they pursue what Godwin & Seldon (2002) call "private goods." The benefits of private goods accrue exclusively to individual firms. Godwin & Seldon provide evidence that private goods dominate the agendas of at least some corporate Washington offices. "Airline lobbyists," they write, "reported spending 75–95% of their time on issues affecting only their firm or their firm and one other."

Godwin & Seldon focus on private goods that contribute directly to the bottom line, such as landing rights for airlines and government contracts. Some firms look beyond immediate material benefits and seek to establish reputations as "good

citizens” or “serious players” that will pay off over the long term. This sort of private good may be acquired by taking a leadership role in collective activity or through individual company efforts. Yoffie & Bergenstein (1985), for instance, describe how American Express “built political capital” by “developing an issue which had broad political appeal, and fit into the agendas of key politicians,” even though that issue was not of great significance to AmEx’s business.

As these examples (and others to be introduced below) illustrate, the set of political science researchers studying individual firms is not empty. It is, however, far smaller than the subject merits, as reviews of research on interest groups have noted time and again. Reflecting on the dominance of companies in their 1996 lobbying report data set, Baumgartner & Leech (1999) write, “A complete understanding of the role of groups in politics must involve significant study of the role of individual corporations.” Dahl (1959), Epstein (1980), Salisbury (1984), and Berry (1994) reach similar conclusions.

Neither my assessment of the importance of the subject nor my observation about the lack of attention paid to it is original, so why isn’t there more work in this area? Possible answers include lack of interest among political scientists in the substance of issues that concern businesses, dislike for the policy positions of businesses, and the difficulty of gathering information about businesses. All of these barriers, however important they may be, would be diminished if political scientists believed that such work would address important theoretical issues. Unfortunately, interest group theory as presently constituted has little to say about companies.

BUSINESSES ARE NOT INTEREST GROUPS: THE MISMATCH BETWEEN INTEREST GROUP THEORY AND THE CORPORATION

The fundamental mismatch between interest group theory and the study of businesses as political actors is implicit in the term interest group. The ideal-typical interest group is a voluntary association of citizens who seek to influence public policy. The ideal-typical corporation is a hierarchy that seeks to maximize profits. Investment in political capabilities is simply one among many means for doing so and not necessarily the most important. These differences in structure and goals between the two kinds of organizations are so fundamental that we must develop a political theory of the firm that is distinctive from interest group theory (Salisbury 1984).

The need for such a theory is palpable in the study of mobilization, that is, the entry of interest organizations into the political sphere. Olson focused the attention of interest group researchers on mobilization in 1965, and much of the field’s energy since then has been devoted to understanding how citizens surmount barriers to collective action. Some of this work is relevant to business associations, particularly those with large memberships. These organizations may well offer selective incentives, for instance, to their members and to the individuals who

represent the members in association activities. However, as King & Walker (1992) show, these benefits are very different from those that accrue to citizens who join interest groups (or patrons who support them).

Olson (1965) himself notes that his "byproduct" theory is of limited applicability to associations with small memberships, in which strategic considerations complicate interactions. The same is true of mobilization by companies. Olson's framework is most useful in explaining why small firms rarely have any political capabilities. They usually free-ride on the efforts of other actors, just as many citizens do. Business units within a large, diversified firm may also fall prey to the collective action problem when the corporate government affairs function is highly dependent on diverse units of the firm for support. In such an instance, no single unit perceives that it would benefit enough from investing in government affairs to do so, even though from the perspective of the firm as a whole the investment might be worthwhile.

More typically, though, government affairs units report to corporate headquarters. Headquarters' control helps to assure that this function reflects the firm's general interests, rather than the parochial interests of its subsidiary units. Government affairs managers may even reflect the firm's expected general interests in the future if information from the firm's strategic planning process is incorporated into their work. Centralization of corporate government affairs limits coordination problems and reduces transaction costs. Such benefits provide one major justification for the existence of corporate hierarchy in general (Williamson 1981).

Autonomous individuals, the key units in the theories of Olson (1965), Salisbury (1969), and others, are absent in this context. In principle, the chief executive officer (CEO) determines when the interests of the firm warrant entry into or exit from the political process based on information flowing up from his subordinates. Subordinates, in turn, implement the decision. This process may be conceived of in a variety of ways and has many pathologies, some of which are discussed below, but it is different from the mobilization process as it is usually understood in the interest group literature.

Hierarchy also has important implications for preference formation, such as the establishment of issue priorities and positions. Interest group theory typically assumes that groups reflect the values of their members. Some groups have formal procedures for consulting their memberships, and most presumably keep tabs informally. The ultimate check on any group, though, is its ability to garner resources. A constant stream of communication from the leadership is required to attract and retain members and to win lump-sum patronage. Groups often rely on the media as well as direct communications to demonstrate that their priorities and positions remain aligned with those of members and patrons. Media coverage gives these resource providers an apparently independent source of evidence about group efficacy. If resources falter, groups may respond by changing their preferences (Moe 1981, Coglianese 1996).

Corporate government affairs organizations do not express the values of a membership, whether conceived as the employees or the shareholders. As Salisbury (1984) puts it, speaking of institutions more broadly, "It is not member interests as

such that are crucial, but the judgments of organizational leaders about the needs of the institution as a continuing organization.” Regular communication within the hierarchy, both formal and informal, shapes these judgments and aligns the positions and priorities of government affairs with headquarters and other units. The corporate budget process and the hiring and firing of managers provide the ultimate checks in this system.

Preference formation is also significantly affected by the second key characteristic that distinguishes businesses from interest groups, the pursuit of profit. Companies are more likely and more able than interest groups to drop issues and change positions, because business conditions and strategies are more variable than the commitments of members and patrons. For the same reasons, businesses are more likely to compromise and demonstrate flexibility than interest groups. In addition, businesses are likely to be interested in a broader range of policies than most interest groups, which tend to benefit from specialization and appeal to narrow, intense member and patron preferences.

The political strategies and tactics of companies bear more resemblance to those of ideal-typical groups because both operate in the same external institutional environment. It seems reasonable, therefore, to lump groups and companies together in, for instance, theories about the selection of venues for legislative lobbying or issue framing (Baumgartner et al. 2000, Hojnacki & Kimball 1998). However, even in this area, important differences should be noted. The most obvious are the potential scale of corporate political resources and the potential speed with which they can be deployed. Government affairs functions receive only a tiny fraction of corporate revenues, but in a crisis, the hierarchy can divert funds to match virtually any challenge.

The scope of corporate political resources is also potentially broader than that of interest groups, and not merely because businesses have more money (although that helps). Business assets may be used to achieve policy goals in subtler ways than the heavy-handed capital strikes envisioned by structural power theorists. Prices may be altered temporarily to change the perceived need for political action, as research on the pharmaceutical industry has shown (Ellison & Wolfram 2001). Product design may also manifest political intent, as in the case of “safer” cigarettes (Miles 1982). Employees, suppliers, and others who are subject to the control of the hierarchy may be instructed to act on behalf of the firm’s political objectives (Baron 1995).

Companies are also constrained strategically in ways that interest groups are not. Most obviously, they operate within a different legal regime, for instance, in the areas of antitrust and campaign finance. Businesses are more likely to face public skepticism about their legitimacy and will tend therefore to use strategies and tactics that reduce their visibility (Hula 1999, Mitchell et al. 1997). Whereas interest groups thrive on and may even require media coverage, businesses may well shy from it.

These observations about political mobilization, preference formation, and strategic and tactical choice illustrate my title’s claim that businesses are not interest groups. They are a specific sort of institution (Salisbury 1984). Interest group

theory must be qualified and amended and some aspects of it discarded if we are to get analytic purchase on them. An alternative starting point for the study of firms as political actors is the economic theory of the firm.

BEYOND OLSON: THE NEOCLASSICAL MICROECONOMIC APPROACH

The firm is a peculiar entity when viewed from the microeconomic perspective. If all the assumptions of neoclassical microeconomic theory are fully realized, the firm need not exist at all. Individuals operating with complete information and optimizing at the margins would contract with one another to carry out the economic activity that is ascribed to firms. Studies of firm behavior, however, tend to treat firms themselves as if they are rational individuals and to ignore what goes on inside them.

The “as if” approach provides the standard assumptions for most economists who have delved into politics and for many political scientists as well. Stigler’s (1975) theory of regulatory capture provides a good entry point into the neoclassical microeconomic approach to the politics of firms. Stigler assumes that businesses invest in political capabilities in order to maximize the rents that they receive through government policies that restrict competition. Stigler works backward from the results of government action to derive the parameters that determine firm behavior; “truly intended effects,” he writes, “should be deduced from actual effects. . . .”

This approach has been developed most fully by scholars of international trade under the rubric of endogenous tariffs. Their idea is similar to Stigler’s: Businesses invest in influencing trade policy in order to create barriers against foreign competitors. Endogenous tariff models imply that firms make political decisions, yet very often scholars in this literature take the industry, rather than the firm, to be the unit of analysis. Grossman & Helpman (1994) simply state that “we do not at this point have a theory of lobby formation.”

More recent work has attempted to fill this void. Game theoretic models have been developed to identify the conditions under which firms will choose to cooperate in seeking protection. Pecorino (2001), for instance, provides depth to Olson’s concept of “intermediate” groups, exploring the relationship between the relative size of dominant and challenger firms and the propensity to cooperate. When the gap in size between these firms is relatively modest, they have difficulty maintaining cooperation. Pecorino points out that his model predicts a nonlinear relationship between standard measures of industrial concentration and levels of collective action, contrary to the specifications commonly used to test Olson’s theory.

Empirical work on endogenous tariffs has lagged behind modeling. By and large, researchers in this tradition use campaign contributions, particularly those of political action committees (PACs), to measure the political activity of companies. In doing so, they add to “a body of research infamous for its contradictory findings”

(Baumgartner & Leech 1998, p. 133). PAC contributions are just one of many tactics that firms or their representatives can employ in their attempts to exert political influence, and they have the potentially significant disadvantage of being highly visible (Lowery & Gray 1997). Contributions are made for a wide range of purposes, of which influencing trade policy in conjunction with the efforts of other firms is but one. Reliance on PAC data exemplifies the “streetlamp problem” (Godwin & Seldon 2002, Milyo et al. 2000): looking only where the data are most easily available. The disappointing results of these tests (Rodrik 1995) are not surprising.

Lobbying disclosure reports, which have been filed since 1996, should improve measurement of corporate political activity. Schuler (1999), Hansen & Mitchell (2000), and Ansolabehere et al. (2002) use multiple indicators. Better measures will test the neoclassical microeconomic theory of the firm more convincingly, not only in trade policy but also in taxation (Quinn & Shapiro 1991) and other policy areas that have not yet drawn as much attention. Such empirical work will ultimately feed back to the model builders and advance the whole enterprise.

Some of the disappointment alluded to above, however, reflects more fundamental difficulties. The “as if” assumptions are simply too heroic to stand as a complete basis for our understanding of such an important subject. The weakest links in the chain have to do with information. In order to invest rationally in political capabilities, a firm has to “know” (at least probabilistically) what policies will result from its investments and how those policies will affect its bottom line. The last element in this calculus may be feasible in areas like trade and tax policy, in which the costs and benefits of short-run outcomes are quantifiable and relatively predictable. A specific percentage change in a competitor’s cost of doing business, as in the case of a new tariff, can be estimated fairly precisely. Over the longer term, though, such calculations become much more complex. Foreign firms may, for instance, make new investments in the domestic market in order to jump trade barriers, as Japanese auto manufacturers did in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s. Other sorts of policy outcomes have even more ambiguous effects, even in the short term. The costs of regulatory compliance or the benefits of government-funded research and development, especially relative to one’s competitors, for instance, can be hard to guess.

The challenges of estimating how policies will affect profits seem relatively tame compared to those of estimating which policies will emerge under various scenarios of the firm’s behavior. Politics is notoriously fickle. Momentum can shift rapidly and unexpectedly. Elections, crises, and scandals sweep across the entire Washington landscape like tsunamis; turnover in key governmental positions can have comparable effects in narrower policy areas. The marginal contribution made by an additional lobbyist or advertising campaign to a winning or losing cause is often hotly debated, even in retrospect. There is ample room for credit claiming or blaming.

Large firms face additional complexity in making these decisions. A large firm typically must decide how to allocate its political resources across a wide range

of issues, each of which poses the informational challenges noted above. It may face tradeoffs because the same policy outcome has different effects on different products that it makes (or on current compared to future products). It may attempt to place a value on its political reputation, to estimate what it is worth to the brand to become known as a good citizen.

Firms, especially large ones, have to “know” a lot, then, in order to maximize the payoff from their investments in political capabilities. To be sure, simple rules highlighted by the neoclassical approach can reduce the complexity of the problem. Small firms tend to free-ride. Large firms attend to private goods more conscientiously than collective goods. Yet, we observe firms to be significantly involved in policy making in many other ways. Corporate government affairs officials often state candidly in interviews that they are simply guessing as they go about their work. Indeed, the degree to which their efforts should be evaluated in terms of calculable profit and loss is sometimes a matter of intense disagreement between the Washington office and financially minded executives at headquarters.

The existence of such conflicts points to a second major line of criticism of the neoclassical microeconomic theory of the firm: The firm is not unitary. Even if particular people within the firm possess all the information required to make rational decisions, such decisions are not necessarily made. Indeed, if all the employees of the firm are acting rationally individually, it is quite possible that a decision that is suboptimal from the organization’s perspective will be made. Government affairs representatives might take advantage of their superior knowledge of the political landscape to advance their personal preferences, rather than those of the firm, for example (Dexter 1969, Kersh 2002). CEOs, similarly, may get involved in Washington in order to indulge a taste for national politics and enhance their celebrity. Suspicions about such behavior are common enough to have generated such slang terms as “going native” and “Potomac fever.”

This objection might be addressed by the application of principal-agent models. These models are regularly employed by economists who study investment and vertical and horizontal integration. They view the firm as a “nexus of contracting relationships” (Jensen & Meckling 1976). Contracting, within this frame of reference, is an institutional innovation that helps to solve agency problems. This approach, of course, has been imported into political science under the label “the new economics of organization.” Corporate political behavior, sitting on the boundary between the two disciplines, is a ripe target for it (De Figueiredo & Tiller 2001).

By maintaining the assumption of rational maximization even as it relaxes the assumption of unitary decision making, the “nexus of contracts” theory of the firm multiplies the informational challenges described above. These challenges are particularly great for the firm’s senior executives, its key decision makers. These people are likely to have little time and attention for political matters, and they may lack critical background knowledge to understand political processes. Yet, only these people have a grasp of the future direction of the firm, its overall strategy. These decision makers are likely to turn to informational shortcuts and may well be vulnerable to political pressures within the firm. Under such circumstances,

what Cyert & March (1992) call “the inefficiencies of history” tend to cumulate, rather than being continually squeezed out by optimizing behavior.

These criticisms provide a starting point for an alternative political theory of the firm. I do not mean to dismiss the neoclassical and “nexus of contracts” theories of the firm. Their advocates will certainly continue to produce results worthy of attention. The danger is that, as Stigler put it, it becomes “essentially inconceivable (but not impossible) that the theory of utility-maximizing is wrong.” In this situation, it is possible to demonstrate the quality of one’s understanding, as Grier et al. (1994) do, by modeling the campaign contributions of the cigarette industry without making any reference to controversies about smoking and health.

ALTERNATIVE FOUNDATIONS: THE HISTORICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH

Should the neoclassical microeconomic approach attain monopoly power in this area of research, responsibility will lie less with the exertions of its champions than with the neglect of potential advocates of alternatives. Cyert & March’s “behavioral theory of the firm” serves as the foundation of a rich minority tradition within economics and management (Cyert & March 1992). The core assumptions of this theory [and its numerous contemporary variants (Foss 1997)] diverge dramatically from the conventional approach. They provide a compelling point of departure for the study of firms in politics.

One assumption is that rationality is bounded. Politics is usually so complex and uncertain that neither firms nor individuals within them are able to act as rational maximizers. In order to make decisions about a company’s political agendas, positions, and strategies, executives rely on an array of devices to simplify calculations and resolve uncertainties.

Another assumption is that the internal organization of the firm affects its political attitudes and activities. March (1962) borrowed from pluralist political science to characterize “the business firm as a political coalition.” What people in the firm know and what they care about depend largely on their location and responsibilities within the organization. Rufus Miles put it this way: “Where you stand depends on where you sit.”

The final key assumption of the alternative approach is that the environment is not so constraining that it allows firms no real choices. “Imperfect environmental matching,” as Cyert & March (1992) refer to this assumption, means that firms (and units and processes within them) typically survive even when they make suboptimal choices. Two businesses may thus react to the same political stimulus in different ways. Absent a crisis, these interpretations may be self-reinforcing; small initial differences can thus produce large divergences over time.

The assumptions that underpin the alternative theory of the firm dovetail nicely with those that underpin the historical and institutional approach to political science, expressed in American politics mainly by the subfield of American political development. Although the primary focus of this scholarly community has been the

development of the welfare state, a number of authors have applied this approach to businesses.

Simplifying Devices: Ideology, Instinct, and Abdication

If individuals and organizations are only boundedly rational, they must rely on informational shortcuts to understand their environments and make decisions. Scholars have identified at least three such simplifying devices that businesses use in the political sphere. Ideology serves as a set of cognitive filters and predispositions that reduces the inherent uncertainty of politics. Businesses may also simplify decision making by deferring to the views of an individual, usually at the top of the hierarchy but sometimes at the bottom.

Vogel (1978) characterizes the attitude of American corporate executives toward government as “hostility, distrust, and not infrequently, contempt.” This ideology of antistatism contrasts with that of executives abroad, whose close linkages with the state give them greater confidence in its efficacy and greater acceptance of its legitimacy. Although Vogel’s assessment of its historical sources has not held up well (Gerring 1998, Hawley 1974), antistatism has grown significantly in strength in managerial circles since the 1970s. Plotke (1992) identifies a “discursive project” among conservative scholars and policy activists that enhanced the credibility and social legitimacy of antistatism by providing a convincing interpretation of the economic troubles of that decade.

Ideology can be a particularly powerful force in business political decision making when the CEO has strong views and takes an interest in politics. In such cases, the business’s positions are likely to echo his personal positions. Small firms, family-owned firms, and firms run by their founders are most likely to fit this model. Epstein (1969) supplies several examples, including Henry Ford and his eponymous automobile company. Not surprisingly, the CEOs whom Epstein cites and the businesses they ran clustered on the right side of the political spectrum, supporting anti-Communist and conservative causes.

The importance of ideology depends on the circumstances. The stylized fact that Americans in general are ideologically conservative but operationally liberal has its counterpart among American business executives. General disdain for government is frequently overridden in pursuit of specific benefits. Companies run by “corporate political entrepreneurs” anchor the pragmatic end of the spectrum. Yoffie & Bergenstein (1985) coined this phrase to describe a CEO whose strategy depends fundamentally on some change in policy or politics. The simplifying device in such a setting is not ideology but instinct. The corporate political entrepreneur establishes his firm’s positions and strategies. His hallmark is flexibility; ideology may provide motivation and justification, but building the business is what counts. He resembles in his objectives the rent-seeker modeled in the microeconomic approach, but he is far from being fully informed in making his decisions. Risk taking under uncertainty is intrinsic to entrepreneurship, in politics as well as business.

Yoffie’s archetype corporate political entrepreneur is William McGowan of MCI. MCI’s success would have been impossible without deregulation of the

telecommunications industry, particularly the end of AT&T's monopoly on the provision of long-distance telephone service. The political task was daunting; AT&T was one of the world's largest businesses, its stock widely held by widows and orphans, its clout legendary. McGowan, among other things, moved MCI's headquarters to Washington, DC, in order to move the deregulatory process along, which it ultimately did with spectacular consequences. As Noam (2003) puts it, McGowan and his allies "did not so much bust a trust as split a policy coalition."

The concept of the corporate political entrepreneur has not been much developed beyond Yoffie's sketch. Although they are surely exceptional among their peers, these CEOs may be particularly valuable to study because of their substantive and symbolic impact. Henry Kaiser catalyzed changes in public policy and business in areas as diverse as construction, defense, and health care (Adams 1997). More recently, Kenneth Lay of Enron seems to fit the description of a corporate political entrepreneur, using the firm's "political muscle" to create "regulatory black holes" (Gerth & Oppel 2001). It seems likely that the growth of the federal government over the past century produced an increasing number of such people and businesses at the national level, although as the MCI and Enron examples suggest, deregulation may provide promising entrepreneurial opportunities as well.

Many CEOs have neither strong ideological views nor strong political instincts. Some, in fact, abdicate responsibility for the political activities of the firm altogether. Such a manager may well lead a business that has no such activities at all. However, he may also delegate political responsibility to an agent who has sufficient autonomy that her own preferences may then be equated with those of the business. Kersh's (2002) direct observation of 11 business lobbyists, some of whom are Washington representatives of companies, leads him to conclude that this situation is not rare. "[M]ost clients know little of Washington activity and decisions, in part because of the ambiguous and complex nature of the policy process." Washington representatives are therefore able to do what they please most of the time, keeping the "big bosses" in the dark or persuading them that the lobbyists know what's best for the business.

Kersh's findings challenge the conventional wisdom in the interest group literature that lobbyists are faithful agents of their employers (Heinz et al. 1993). Whether those findings can be generalized beyond the lobbyists whom he has followed around remains an open question. Establishing credible claims about autonomy is complicated by the paucity of the written record and the interests of all parties in providing accounts that conform to the expectation of faithfulness. It seems likely, though, that abdication by the CEO is not the only prerequisite for lobbyist autonomy; the institutional processes of the firm must also permit it.

Institutional Processes: Specialization, Compensation, and Cultural Norms

The political agendas, positions, and strategies of large American businesses are not usually determined exclusively by the CEO (whether ideologue or entrepreneur)

nor by a gone-native Washington representative, but rather through a “conversation” (a word one hears frequently in discussions with practitioners) within the firm. The shape of this conversation—the voices heard, the terms of the argument, the way it is resolved into a decision, and so on—is determined primarily by institutional processes, that is, formal and informal patterns of interaction and behavior that are taken for granted within the company. The larger the business, the more diverse its products, and the more widespread its facilities, the more complex its conversations are likely to be. In the words of one executive in a large multinational company who had also served in senior positions in the US government, politics at corporate headquarters was just as byzantine as that in Washington and “there’s no *Washington Post* to tell you what’s going on.”

Martin (2000) reports a systematic investigation of intrafirm conversations. One of her central findings is that firms possessing significant “corporate policy capacity” tend to adopt positions that deviate from the dominant conservative ideology in the realm of social policy. Corporate policy capacity arises in part as a byproduct of day-to-day work that engages businesses with government. Many of the human resource managers whom Martin interviewed, for instance, had become familiar with the intricacies of health insurance regulations and job training programs by dint of such experience. Another source of corporate policy capacity is the government affairs function. In large government affairs organizations, “issue managers” are responsible for monitoring specific areas of policy and advising the hierarchy in these areas. Martin argues that coalitions of these two types of policy experts within the firm can exert a powerful influence on a company’s conversation.

Persuasion may account for much of this influence. Experts, to state the obvious, know things that others do not. Martin finds, for instance, that firms that employ policy experts are able to make better estimates of the expected impact of proposed policy changes and of the likelihood that proposals will be enacted. Experts also derive authority and legitimacy from their standing within external professional communities. Parson’s (2003) research on the stratospheric ozone convention, for instance, focuses on the deliberations of intercompany groups of manufacturing experts. These groups, Parson argues, produced substantially larger estimates of potential reductions in the use of ozone-depleting chemicals than their employers had expected, validating tough policy positions. Moreover, they helped their employers realize and even exceed these estimates in practice by becoming internal champions of the new policy.

In addition to altering what is talked about, corporate policy capacity affects who talks to whom. Formal reporting relationships are one indicator. When the government affairs function reports directly to the CEO, for example, policy expertise is more likely to be considered in the decision-making process than when there is no such function or when it reports through an intermediary, such as the general counsel. A subtler form of influence may be exerted when, as is often the case, a policy expert is assigned to manage the conversation within the firm. By determining who gets a say and in what context, she may shape the allocation of attention and the alliances that form around particular positions.

The degree to which firms are willing to invest in and use policy expertise is correlated with firm size. Corporate policy capacity is a fixed cost that does not obviously contribute to the bottom line. Larger firms are more likely to be able to amass the overhead to cover this cost than smaller firms. As Martin (2000) puts it, “the story of decision-making presented here offers insights into the way size matters” in determining preferences. It is not the absolute size of the rents that may accrue to large firms that make their preferences different from those of smaller firms, as the Olsonian tradition suggests, but rather variations in their institutional processes that stem from organizational differences and functional specialization.

Hiring and compensation practices comprise another set of institutional processes that can have significant consequences for businesses as political actors. Firms that reward the acquisition of policy-relevant knowledge and skills and the investment of time in political activities among nonexperts act differently from those that do not. CEOs are sometimes hired, for instance, in part because of their political capabilities (Holland 1994). These capabilities may well be valued for private reasons, such as the need to manage global strategic alliances and engage in other forms of “corporate diplomacy.” In many cases, though, public policy is a key element in the firm’s strategic environment, and the CEO is hired with this fact in mind. “The biggest single change in management during my career,” Pfizer CEO Edmund T. Pratt, Jr., told Santoro (1995), “has been the increase in time that managers spend dealing with government.”

Regardless of the reason why his skills are valued, a CEO who is good at politics will tend to orchestrate sophisticated conversations about policy. In addition to participating in the formulation of his firm’s political strategy, such a CEO is likely to be a valued asset in its implementation, particularly in lobbying. The diffusion of the “CEO club” model of business association, beginning with the formation of the Business Roundtable in 1972 and extending to narrower groups such as the Semiconductor Industry Association, illustrates the increasing use of CEOs as political spokesmen.

A less prominent but potentially more important facet of hiring and compensation pertains to lower-level managers. If these employees share the political interests of the firm and are willing to act on them, they may be deployed in “grassroots” campaigns. Such campaigns are not new, but they are “being used in different, more sophisticated, and potentially more powerful ways” (Goldstein 1999, p. 23). Businesses, especially those with widely dispersed workforces, have made greater use of grassroots mobilization techniques in recent years. They gain access and credibility when they are able to deliver a common message through different voices in different jurisdictions or legislative districts. Goldstein (1999) notes that some businesses now include participation in government affairs activities in their evaluation of key employees, such as plant managers. These local elites or “grass-tops” are the linchpins of lobbying strategies that may also extend to the rank-and-file workforce. When employees are unavailable or unsupportive, suppliers or customers may serve just as well. Baron (1995) advises managers to consider their entire “rent chain” as a potential source of political advantage.

As Goldstein describes, new technologies have made it easier to identify and mobilize the grass-tops and grassroots. However, he does not fully explore the differences between businesses and other interest organizations that use these tactics. Control over the paycheck (or accounts payable) is the biggest of these differences. Businesses also have the advantage of having dedicated electronic communication infrastructures in place, which are regularly in use for nonpolitical purposes. The employee who logs onto the company intranet is likely to be a more reliable messenger than the citizen who gets an email at home from a group to which he belongs. The employee may also be more motivated, particularly if the issue under consideration poses a threat to her livelihood.

Of course, employees and their employers do not necessarily see eye to eye on political matters. Practices that are perceived to provide policy-relevant information and incentives to take action on issues in one organizational context may be seen as high-handed intimidation in another. Such differing perceptions reflect differing cultural norms that prevail within firms. Fones-Wolf (1994) chronicles employer efforts to shape such norms during the 1940s and 1950s. Quaker Oats' IGHAT ("I'm Gonna Holler About Taxes") postcard and petition drive among its employees is a vivid illustration. In that period, unions aggressively sought to establish counter-norms and to mobilize employees for their own political purposes. With the decline in union density over the past half century, this important influence on corporate political culture has diminished substantially.

On the other hand, the workforce is more educated than it used to be, and "knowledge workers" may be more likely to question the company line than their parents or grandparents would have been in the absence of independent unions. In the high-technology industry, for instance, many in the rank and file hold libertarian and antiauthoritarian views. Efforts to mobilize them for relatively narrow corporate purposes may lower morale or even provoke a backlash. At least one high-technology business that I have studied refrains from conducting grassroots campaigns for these reasons.

The institutions of the firm affect the availability of policy-relevant information, the attention paid to it, and the ways it is interpreted. Those that I have discussed—specialized functions, compensation practices, and cultural norms—by no means exhaust the set of institutions that may be relevant to corporate political attitudes and behavior. Of course, institutional analysis inevitably leads to inquiry into the origins and malleability of institutions. If particular environmental conditions always produce similar institutional responses, the latter become little more than transmission belts for more fundamental causes. If, on the other hand, the assumption of imperfect environmental matching holds, researchers are impelled to complement institutional analysis with historical analysis.

Imperfect Environmental Matching: Learning, Path Dependence, and Crisis

Cyert & March's (1992) claim that the environment in which firms operate typically falls far short of constraining their choices is perhaps the most controversial aspect

of their critique of the neoclassical microeconomic theory of the firm. If (as the latter theory holds) similarly positioned firms imperil their survival by failing to follow similar courses of action in response to similar environmental conditions, institutional and other differences between them become irrelevant. Either these differences are eliminated by choice or by bankruptcy, or they become equally good and equally unimportant means to the same end. Either way, it is as if they were fully informed, unitary, rational decision makers. If, on the other hand, the environment permits such firms to vary, then one must open the organizational “black box” to understand why.

The economic environment is sometimes harsh and unforgiving. Small stumbles may be magnified by the reactions of investors, customers, suppliers, and employees. The political environment is less often so. Failure to attain an electoral, legislative, or regulatory objective only rarely jeopardizes a company’s existence or even makes an obvious dent in the bottom line. Moreover, as I argued above, the complexity and opacity of the policy process make credit and blame difficult to assign. When virtually every outcome is subject to interpretation, similarly positioned firms can easily reach different conclusions about what to do next.

One might characterize this process as learning. Suarez (2000), for example, studied how large pharmaceutical firms responded to success and failure in securing tax breaks for facilities located in Puerto Rico over multiple legislative episodes across a couple of decades. In some episodes, these firms worked together as political allies; in others, they did not. Suarez argues that a poor policy outcome in one episode prompted a change in strategy during the next one and that a good outcome led to maintenance of the same strategy. Learning in this account is little more than “an automatic response guided by prior experiences” (p. 109). Suarez finds that firms do not consider whether something other than their strategies led to these outcomes nor whether the political environment changed significantly between episodes. Nor are lessons derived that span issues or transcend firm boundaries.

Martin (2000) advances a more nuanced vision of corporate political development. She identifies a range of “policy legacies” that systematically shape perceptions and actions over time. The most interesting form of policy legacy is institutional change within the firm. Employer-provided health insurance constitutes such a legacy, according to Martin. The repeated failure of reformers to establish national health insurance induced employers (often under union pressure) to offer health insurance as a fringe benefit. The corporate human resources bureaucracies that arose to administer these benefits became, as we have seen, a major element of corporate policy capacity. More important, the pattern of costs imposed by the private provision of benefits and the associated pattern of behavior powerfully influenced the preferences of firms, so much so that these patterns ultimately hardened into norms (Hacker 1998).

Imperfect environmental matching may allow not only for durable variation in firm responses to external stimuli, but also for the endurance of internal idiosyncracies. The quirks of company founders, for instance, are often perpetuated by their successors and may have important political consequences. IBM CEO Thomas Watson, Jr. adopted a code of conduct banning corporate political contributions

in the 1970s; in 2000, IBM was one of only nine firms in the *Fortune* 100 that had neither formed a PAC nor contributed soft money. Watson's early successors maintained his policy because they shared his beliefs and were loyal to him. His later successors were constrained by both internal and external perceptions that IBM's political style precluded such giving; being such a large and long-standing noncontributor gave the firm a certain cachet that counterbalanced the costs of opting out of the money game (Hart 2001).

"Path-dependent institutional development" is a broader, more neutral, and more accurate description of these kinds of historical processes than "learning." Once networks, organizational structures, and norms are set in place—whether as a result of careful, conscious reflection or by automatic reflex—they may well become self-reinforcing. In a relatively peripheral function of the firm, in the confusing domain of politics and policy, "timing and sequence" (Pierson 2000) matter even more than they do in the economic sphere. This vision of firms having distinctive political competencies derived from historical choices and accidents accords nicely with the emerging "resource-based" theory of the firm, which posits an analogous process in the development and execution of corporate strategies (Foss 1997, Miles 1982).

However, the "inefficiencies of history," to invoke Cyert & March's phrase again, may not cumulate forever. Moments of crisis tend to shake things up. Microsoft, for instance, quite deliberately eschewed significant investments in its political capabilities during the 1990s, even as it grew to be the most powerful company in one of the United States' most important industries. The Department of Justice's 1998 lawsuit, which threatened to break the firm up, finally prompted Microsoft to engage intensively with Washington and to become more like its brethren in the *Fortune* 500 in this regard (Hart 2002).

The Microsoft case illustrates a possible difference between path dependence in political institutions, as advanced by Pierson, and corporate political capabilities. Pierson (2000) portrays crises as momentary "critical junctures" in which seemingly small events place institutions on paths that get "locked in" during ensuing longer periods of normality. The institutional theory of the firm reverses this sequence. Environmental slack during long periods of normality allows path-dependent divergences to appear; crises, like Microsoft's, produce conformity, because the external constraints on firms are much tighter.

This hypothesis suggests that the predictions of the neoclassical and institutional theories of the firm may converge during crises, whereas Pierson's argument suggests that the rational choice and path dependence theories of politics diverge in these periods. When firms are competing with one another (as Microsoft and its adversaries are), convergence makes sense. The competitors must quickly determine what works or go under. After the crisis passes, they can drift onto distinctive paths. When a group of firms faces a crisis together, on the other hand, collective, monopolistic institutions like those that Pierson has in mind may well emerge. A self-regulatory code, for instance, may bind these firms to particular strategies and practices that long outlive the crisis that precipitated the code's imposition.

One way to interpret this sort of convergence is to view the neoclassical theory of the firm as a special case of the institutional theory that is useful when particular conditions obtain, including a fierce selection environment and intense attention to the political domain. Another interpretation holds that, even if the predictions of the theories converge, their underlying mechanisms remain distinct. If one conceives of crises as characterized by even more uncertainty than routine politics, the assumptions of the neoclassical theory are even less likely to be realized under these conditions. The Microsoft case fits the first interpretation better, since antitrust is a relatively routinized policy process; the recent “corporate responsibility” crisis precipitated by Enron illustrates the second interpretation.

CONCLUSION: LOOKING FORWARD

These ruminations reinforce the main point of this paper: We need to do more work, both theoretical and empirical, on businesses as actors in American politics. They are present in large numbers in Washington, but we have only a vague idea of what they are doing and why. To be sure, they are participating in and “managing” associations, but that is far from all. If scholars of American politics believe that they understand “business” because they understand associations, they are sorely mistaken. That conclusion, unfortunately, is what received interest group theory leads us to believe. Businesses are conceived to be much like individual citizens and our attention is focused on when and how they overcome the collective action dilemma. The weaknesses of the analogy are obvious but usually ignored.

If we begin with the theory of the firm, rather than interest group theory, we gain more leverage on the political attitudes and behavior of firms. The neoclassical theory of the firm, which portrays it as a unitary, profit-maximizing actor, has been begun to be developed in this regard. The insights from this approach are likely to be valid when the calculations that it assumes can be made relatively easily or when the environment weeds out those who do not act as if they have made such calculations. But these conditions are not realized much of the time.

An alternative theory of the firm exists, and it meshes well with the historical and institutional tradition in political science. Early efforts have unearthed valuable findings and point toward new territory that warrants exploration. One important set of questions revolves around CEOs (and other senior executives), who are presumed to be the ultimate decision makers within firms. Although we know precious little about their political activities or even the amount of time they devote to them, CEOs loom large from a theoretical perspective. Another high priority for research is organizational structure and its intersection with corporate culture. Corporate government affairs executives assert that “the boxes on the org chart” mean little and that informal relationships (or, as one put it to me, “senior executive buy-in”) are the key to understanding why they do what they do. Martin’s work suggests otherwise; the factional cleavages that define “the firm as a political coalition” are rooted in organizational structure. A third promising area for future

work is hiring, evaluation, and compensation. The way a firm assesses and rewards its employees shapes its “conversations” about policy issues as well as its capacities for taking action. In each of these areas, historical analysis is likely to be essential for understanding cross-sectional variation.

For the sake of expedience, I have justified the need for more political science research on individual companies on crass, empirical grounds. There is a gaping hole in what we know about Washington. That hole, though, has a normative significance that is worth emphasizing in conclusion. The Internet revolution notwithstanding, large companies remain, as Drucker (1964) observed, the leading institutions in American society. They exercise substantial power over people as workers and consumers. As citizens, however, the people are meant to have a check on this power. We need not presume that companies act malevolently when they take part in politics, nor even that their pursuit of their interests will necessarily redound to the detriment of the general interest. But we ought to find out what it is that they are doing, so that we can make informed judgments about them and, perhaps, reform the political system in response.

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CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION

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Key Words civic education, schooling, deliberative democracy, social capital

■ **Abstract** This paper surveys three sources of conflict about citizenship and education in contemporary normative political theory: the extent to which rival conceptions of citizenship differ in the ends they prescribe for civic education; disagreement about the educational processes needed to yield accepted civic educational ends and how some of those processes might best be institutionalized via schooling; and disagreement about how liberal legitimacy constrains state action undertaken for the sake of democratic education.

INTRODUCTION

The nature of citizenship and the education suited to its realization have traditionally figured among the basic questions of normative political theory. Their neglect during the middle decades of the twentieth century was merely a consequence of the marginalization of ethics and political philosophy in general throughout the English-speaking academic world. Yet the revival of normative theory spurred by the publication of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* did not immediately restore questions about civic identity and its cultural formation to their customary place near the core of the subject (Rawls 1971). To be sure, Part III of Rawls's treatise sketched an argument that the cultivation of a sense of justice in both the family and the wider associational life of a well-ordered society might anchor the stability of that society over time. But in the decade after its publication, that particular argument was largely overlooked in the voluminous literature that *A Theory of Justice* spawned. The derivation of Rawls's conception of justice as fairness was the focus of academic attention, along with the development of rival, mainly liberal interpretations of distributive justice and the comparison of these with Rawls's.

Whatever else it achieved, the re-emergence of communitarianism in the 1980s helped to expose the limitations of the fixation on principles of distributive justice that then beset liberal theory. MacIntyre (1981) assailed the liberal tradition for discounting the substantive social ties on which a coherent moral life partly depended; Sandel (1982) claimed that justice as fairness presupposed a socially deracinated conception of the self—the so-called “unencumbered self”—and was representative of liberalism as a whole in this regard; and Walzer (1983) defended

a style of thinking about justice that forfeited the heady abstractions of Rawls for a particularized interest in people's shared understandings of goods proper to different social spheres and the shifting contingencies of their memberships in such spheres. At the same time, some feminist scholarship questioned the primacy of justice in liberal theory by posing an alternative "ethic of care" as the basis for a common morality (Gilligan 1982, 1987). The currency of these communitarian and feminist arguments in the 1980s revealed the need to think about the character and capabilities of citizens in a free society, how that character and those capabilities might be learned and taught inside and outside civic roles, and how institutions might be designed to protect them against erosion. Liberals were prompt to respond to that challenge, and questions about citizenship, civil society, the family, and education were once again brought to the foreground of normative debate (e.g., Galston 1991, Macedo 1990, Okin 1989).

Developments in democratic theory around the same time also conspired to give a new salience to citizenship and its educational preconditions. The "deliberative turn" in democratic theory that began to gather momentum in the late 1980s entailed a view of citizen participation as a distinctive moral engagement directed toward the common good (Bessette 1994, Cohen 1989, Gutmann 1993, Manin 1987). Regardless of where different theorists located the optimal balance between representative and direct participatory institutions, that view required fresh thought about the educational processes that would equip citizens to manage the responsibilities of deliberative citizenship. Perhaps not surprisingly, the most important book on education in democratic theory in the past two decades was written by one of the most influential deliberative theorists (Gutmann 1987).

In the decade that followed, three important intellectual sources enriched and complicated the discourse on citizenship and education. First, Putnam's hugely influential research on the relationship between "social capital" and the effectiveness of democratic institutions revived interest in the empirical study of citizen identity and its sustaining sources in the cultural infrastructure of democracies (Putnam 1995, 2000). Second, normative theory at last fully registered the significance of the identity politics that had altered the political landscape in many societies since the 1960s (Kymlicka 1995, Parekh 2000, Young 1990). If citizenship had to be construed in many instances as "multicultural" or as adapted to what Rawls called the "permanent fact of pluralism," then our understanding of citizenship and the educational practices that supported it had to be revised accordingly. Civic education could no longer be understood as wedded to the ideal of the culturally homogeneous nation-state (Reich 2002). Third, the quickening pace of cultural and economic globalization was taken by many to signal the necessity for new civic ideals, international in reach, that would be better adapted to the realities of politics in an increasingly interdependent world. Such ideals would serve as a bulwark against the hatred and violence that ethnic and religious nationalism had triggered in some of the most terrible events of the late twentieth century.

In this essay, I survey three durable sources of conflict about citizenship and education in contemporary theory: the extent to which rival conceptions of

citizenship differ in the ends they prescribe for civic education; disagreement about the educational processes needed to yield accepted civic educational ends and how some of those processes might best be institutionalized via schooling; and disagreement about how liberal legitimacy constrains state action undertaken for the sake of democratic education. My focus throughout is on normative theory. I largely ignore empirical investigation of the relationship between civic information, civic instruction in schools, and civic participation. This has been very recently and ably surveyed in this journal (Galston 2001).

THE ENDS OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Self-Interest and Citizenship

A normative conception of citizenship fulfills two complementary tasks. First, it specifies the rights that properly belong to citizens and the conditions under which those rights are permissibly bestowed or denied (Marshall 1964). The rights of citizenship must include some level of guaranteed educational provision. This is one of the few points of consensus in contemporary discourse on distributive justice; all but the most *outré* libertarians endorse it, despite much disagreement about whether strictly equal educational opportunity is required, and if so, how the requirement should be interpreted (Brighouse 2000, Roemer 1998). I return briefly to the issue of education as a social right in the penultimate section. But my main interest here is in the second task of citizenship theory.

The second task is to prescribe the ideals and virtues that citizens should develop and the duties they must discharge in order to secure the justice and stability of the polity to which they belong. These ideals, virtues, and duties encompass the proper ends of civic education, and therefore, different conceptions of citizenship entail different prescriptions regarding those ends.

On this account, the role of citizen is assumed to be instrumental to the stability and justice of the society. Disagreement about the criteria for a stably just regime commonly yields disagreement about the substantive responsibilities or virtues of citizens. But agreement about the former is certainly no guarantee of consensus on the latter. Justice and stability in this context are properties of institutions, whereas citizen duties and virtues are the business of individual political agents. What specific set of duties or family of virtues will best promote the political institutions we should want in particular historical circumstances is by no means clear.

One intuitive possibility is to imagine a correspondence between the valued properties of political institutions and the valued traits of citizens—for example, in Rawls's well-ordered society, as in Plato's republic, the stably just character of institutions is mirrored in the reliably just character of the citizenry. Another is to imagine political institutions that operate as an invisible hand, producing valued collective outcomes by exploiting individual traits that entail no intention to contribute to such outcomes. In this vein, one still lively tradition in democratic theory argues that citizens will act politically—if they act politically at all—on the

basis of narrow self-interest, and the genius of democratic institutional design is to channel self-interest in ways that predictably contribute to regime stability. The theory is often couched as if it had no normative ambitions, though these creep in when the merits of its tough-minded common sense are touted as an alternative to the effete idealism of morally ambitious democratic philosophy (e.g., Posner 2003, Schumpeter 1967).

There are some necessary half-truths in the ideal—or perhaps we should call it an “anti-ideal”—of self-interested citizenship. Marshalling many different motives, including self-interest, to support the norms of liberal democracy is prudent statecraft. Racial discrimination in the workplace, say, is easier to combat when it is seen as bad for business and not merely an affront to human dignity. Conversely, compliance with liberal democratic norms is inevitably at risk if it is seen as requiring relentless and costly self-sacrifice. Learning to think of the society in which liberal democratic norms prevail as hospitable to the pursuit of one’s own good is an important facilitating condition of their internalization. Furthermore, the familiar postulate of universal self-interest, and its attendant skepticism about the self-proclaimed virtue of elites, have often served important ends by alerting the politically preyed-upon to the true intentions of their predators (Holmes 1995, p. 65). Something at least akin to that postulate and its skepticism is surely necessary to any education that does not leave future citizens acutely vulnerable to oppression. Most important of all, appreciating the dignity each of us must claim as a free and equal citizen with others involves an affirmation of legitimate self-interest, and therefore, that affirmation is integral to the sense of entitlement that just societies will promote among their citizens (Hampton 1997).

But none of this implies that moral sources of citizenship are unnecessary. Secure, free institutions depend on citizens’ willingness to accommodate others’ interests. Such accommodation would be severely compromised by selective compliance and free-riding if the institutions were widely valued only as means of advancing private ends. The history of self-styled liberal democracies includes many examples of groups excluded from the benefits of equal citizenship, and the persistence of exclusion is typically explained, in part at least, by the advantages exclusion creates for privileged groups (Smith 1997). To suggest that the enlightened self-interest of the privileged could always be invoked to motivate them to give up their unjust advantages is simply preposterous. Of course, that point cannot carry weight against proponents of self-interested citizenship for whom talk of justice is deemed to be largely bereft of cognitive content, a form of rhetoric in which individual preference (i.e., self-interest) typically disguises itself as something more high-minded. But even if we settled for the ideal of a merely stable rather than a stably just democracy, the proposal that self-interest could generate the necessary regime support, as Christiano (1995, pp. 131–59) has shown, is probably incoherent.

Agreeing that citizenship cannot be adequate when it is animated solely by self-interest obviously does little by itself to bring us to consensus on the ends of civic education. For one thing, disagreement about the distributive (and retributive)

principles that distinguish a just society will produce some differences in what we count as developing justice as a personal virtue, given that the personal virtue is instrumentally related to the realization of a just society. Nevertheless, conflict about principles of justice in the real world of any culturally entrenched liberal democracy occurs against a background of shared public morality, which cannot be repudiated without perpetrating the civic analogue to religious heresy. Libertarians and democratic socialists may belong within the sphere of respectable contention but theocrats or devotees of discrimination against particular classes of citizens do not. (Who counts as theocratic or discriminatory is of course a matter of respectable contention. False charges of heresy are always a grave evil in the eyes of the seriously devout.) Therefore, a civic education worth its name will steel the spirit against the pull of liberal democratic heresy—it will be antiracist and antidiscriminatory, among other things. What it does beyond that consensual core is fraught with controversy. Two questions that loom especially large in recent literature are the role of autonomy in civic virtue and the comparative merits of a patriotic as opposed to a cosmopolitan sensibility.

Autonomy and Civic Virtue

By personal autonomy I mean the skills and inclination to choose on the basis of critical thought about the right and the good. The ideal of personal autonomy has been integral to the liberal tradition since the Enlightenment. The communitarian critique of the “unencumbered self” that Sandel (1982) made famous in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* was in part an indictment of personal autonomy, and the exaltation of diversity in the identity politics and multiculturalism of the following decade challenged the universality of autonomy from a different angle. So why believe that autonomy is necessary to citizenship?

A representative example of the way in which autonomy is connected with the educational agenda of citizenship is Gutmann & Thompson’s (1996) argument. “In its civic education deliberative democracy goes further than most other forms of democracy. It would teach children not only to respect human dignity but to appreciate its role in sustaining political cooperation on terms acceptable to morally motivated citizens.” That appreciation in turn requires them to “understand the diverse ways of life of their fellow citizens” (Gutmann & Thompson 1996, p. 66). Because I must seek to cooperate with others politically on terms that make sense from *their* moral perspective as well as my own, I must be ready to enter that perspective imaginatively so as to grasp its distinctive content. Many such perspectives prosper in liberal democracies, and so the task of reciprocal understanding is necessarily onerous. Still, our actions as deliberative citizens must be grounded in such reciprocity if political cooperation on terms acceptable to us as (diversely) morally motivated citizens is to be possible at all. This is tantamount to an imperative to think autonomously inside the role of citizen because I cannot refuse to consider moral views alien to my own without flouting my responsibilities as a deliberative citizen. Of course, the practice of autonomy inside civic roles

might coincide with its repudiation elsewhere in our lives, but it is far from obvious that autonomy is easily confined to the civic sphere once it has securely taken root there.

Gutmann & Thompson's (1996) argument is representative in the way it connects moral pluralism as a permanent fact of life in free societies with the need for a widely diffused personal autonomy that enables an appreciative embrace of pluralism. But not all normative theorists who have tried to forge conceptions of citizenship that accommodate pluralism have taken this tack. Galston (1995) has deprecated the "valorization of choice" in autonomy-centered ideals of the liberal state; the protection of deep diversity is the fulcrum of a free society, according to Galston, and that requires a respect for the educational choices of parents who would reject an education for their children that instills autonomy. In a similar vein, Rawls's move from a comprehensive to a political liberalism requires him to reject the idea that any doctrine of personal autonomy is integral to liberal citizenship:

The liberalisms of Kant and Mill may lead to requirements designed to foster the values of autonomy and individuality as ideals that govern much if not all of life. But political liberalism has a different source and requires far less. It will ask that children's education include such things as knowledge of their constitutional and civic rights so that, for example, they know that apostasy is not a legal crime, all this to ensure that their continued membership when they come of age is not based simply on ignorance of their basic rights or fear of punishment for offenses that do not exist. Moreover, their education should also prepare them to be fully cooperating members of society and enable them to be self-supporting; it should also encourage the political virtues so that they want to honor the fair terms of social cooperation in their relations with the rest of society. (Rawls 1993, p. 199)

The evident purpose of this passage is to stress how little civic education demands once it is understood according to Rawls's political liberalism. The example of the child who might grow up thinking that apostasy is illegal underscores that purpose. (Imagine how impoverished and insular a child's upbringing would have to be for that thought to take root and endure.) Yet, on closer inspection, Rawls's apparent endorsement of an austere civic minimalism makes no sense, given the logic of his own case for political liberalism. His offhand allusion to virtues that support "the fair terms of social cooperation" has to be understood in the light of his interpretation of how such terms must be discursively constructed, and that interpretation pulls him toward much the same conception of civic education that Gutmann & Thompson (1996) advocate. For Rawls, the idea of fair terms of social cooperation is tied to his political conception of the person. That conception imposes requirements of mutual understanding on a diverse citizenry, requirements that bring autonomy in through the back door of political liberalism (Callan 1997, pp. 39–42). Other liberal theorists who have addressed the issue of education and pluralism have been less diffident than Rawls in accepting the pressure toward

personal autonomy that a liberal civic education will inevitably exert (Levinson 1999, Macedo 2000, Reich 2002, Shapiro & Arneson 1996).

The convergence of political liberalism and deliberative democracy on this point yields a paradoxical conclusion. An education intended to promote robust mutual respect in conditions of deep diversity must substantially limit that diversity by militating against ways of life (including otherwise laudable ways of life) that are repugnant to personal autonomy. That conclusion is apt to be unwelcome to many friends of diversity, who will seek a less homogenizing ideal of social cooperation with concomitantly more inclusive conceptions of citizenship and civic education. Multiculturalists such as Parekh (2000) regard liberal partiality to autonomy as but another example of western ethnocentrism (pp. 109–11).

Morally ambitious ideals of civic concord unite the projects of deliberative democracy and Rawlsian political liberalism, and those ideals generate taxing demands on citizens for mutual understanding and autonomy. To escape the demands, we might forgo the ambitions that generate them. Suppose we retreat to a less exacting citizenship that settles for mutual forbearance rather than mutual respect. After all, I can tolerate others without understanding their moral perspective or thinking for myself. But personal autonomy still has a civic value that derives not from ambitious ideals of civic concord but from prudent fears about the vulnerability to abuse that unequal power always creates for those with the lesser power. Those fears are no less reasonable in the political context of mutual forbearance than under a regime of mutual respect. A widely diffused personal autonomy is a social corrective, perhaps even a necessary corrective to the susceptibility to demagoguery and self-destructive tribalism that afflict mass politics.

Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism

Since the inception of the nation-state, political education has been bound up with the project of nation-building, and the inculcation of patriotism has been widely regarded as a primary purpose of mass schooling. But the civic value of patriotism is vulnerable to objections from multiculturalists, who reject it as an instrument of assimilationism, and from cosmopolitans, who see it as a species of arbitrary moral tribalism. The cosmopolitan critique has been most famously developed by Nussbaum (1996), in whose work it derives from the moral premises of Stoicism. But the critique need not depend on premises as controversial as those.

The boundaries between nation-states never have corresponded to the distinctions of mutual interdependence that are widely thought to be the proper basis for ties of mutual civic obligation. Political boundaries have always had far more to do with brute facts about military conquest and defeat than with anything else. Yet the accelerating integration of the global economy and the (somewhat slower) growth of transnational political and legal institutions make the illusion that nationality has some deep moral import seem ever more preposterous, at least according to some theorists. If nation-states constitute nothing of deep moral consequence, then neither would the patriotic ties they have traditionally cultivated in their efforts to

forge a cohesive national identity. Williams (2003) claims that the interpersonal dependencies that give rise to civic obligation do so by creating “communities of shared fate.” Membership is determined there not by national identity but by facts about mutual need and vulnerability that hold regardless of our affinities and antipathies: “Here the idea is not that membership entails a shared *identity* with any particular content, but comes by virtue of being entangled with others in such a way that one’s future is tied to theirs.” According to Williams, globalization has triggered the proliferation of connections of shared fate that cut across the boundaries between national communities, creating new sites for civic engagement that will loom increasingly large in our children’s lives. In a word, the model of citizenship as shared national identity has become “obsolescent” (Williams 2003).

Patriotism can take a great variety of forms and serve many contradictory ends. It could inspire many who fought in the Vietnam War; it could also motivate those who struggled to bring it to an end. It gave emotional fuel to the growth of fascism; it fortified many who gave their lives in the defeat of fascism. And so on. So if a general indictment of patriotism were warranted, it could not merely generalize from the indecent cases. Nevertheless, the bare possibility of an honorable patriotism does not redeem its status as a virtue. Patriotism seems insufficient for civically praiseworthy conduct, even in circumstances when the merely patriotic action is overtly the same as the just and patriotic or compassionate and patriotic action. If some French citizens fought the Nazis because they “loved France” but had no concern whatsoever for the well-being or dignity of the Nazis’ victims, then their behavior was outwardly consistent with political virtue but not indicative of such virtue. Furthermore, if patriotism is not sufficient for political virtue, neither is it necessary. People who resist tyranny out of a sense of justice that is entirely indifferent to where it occurs need not develop a special love of their own country before their resistance to domestic tyranny counts as admirable.

One source of confusion in all this is the fact that we have more than one concept of patriotism. Loyalty to and identification with the nation is not the same as loyalty to and identification with the corresponding state, assuming that the nation in question has its own state. I exhibit my loyalty to the state by obeying its laws and upholding its authority. But loyalty to the nation may inspire me to criticize or to disobey the state. Of course, the two concepts are connected. To identify with the nation as the patriot does is to cherish one’s membership in a trans-generational political community, and for more than two centuries the aspiration to collective self-rule that gives the community its political character has typically been realized through the creation of sovereign states.

A revealing contrast between the two concepts is that the conduct required by nation-centered patriotism is often contestable to a degree that its state-centered counterpart is not. The question of whether my actions are loyal or disloyal to the state usually admits a pretty clear answer. Yet, when one asks how to act appropriately out of loyalty to or love for the nation, the answer is more often elusive and controversial. The question of how one should love an object of love is of prime importance in human life, not least because we typically enjoy rather more discretion in answering that question than in determining the prior matter of

whether we should love in the first place. Nation-centered patriotism is a normatively important concept precisely because it can be exercised in either morally laudable or contemptible ways.

The association of patriotic sentiment with the idea of a just democratic community is a pivotal idea in Part III of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, even though the word patriotism is not to be found in the text. Rawls envisages a process in which the sense of justice arises in children's lives through ties of affection and loyalty that link the individual to the cross-generational political community that sustains a just regime over time. But Rawls cannot parry the objections of the cosmopolitan antipatriot, for one of the simplifying assumptions of Rawlsian "ideal theory" is that the society envisaged by the theorist is a closed cooperative scheme that people enter only at birth and leave only at death. Whatever associational ties bind them to that scheme can raise no problems about unprincipled partiality toward insiders, nor scruples about the abuse or exploitation of outsiders. Things are plainly different in the real world, where the history of nations is replete with arbitrary exclusions and the most terrible violence is visited upon outsiders in the name of national preservation or glory. So if the idea of a *closed* cooperative scheme is to mark the range of our civic obligations, then, in a world where our mutual dependencies are increasingly dense and elaborate, the entire world is quite properly the arena for our civic virtue.

But the truth about the global reach of the obligations that the best political morality would acknowledge does not tell us much about the appropriate shape of the communities and institutions in which that morality should be enacted and the criteria of membership that govern who belongs in them. Suppose we say that mutual dependency should be the marker of democratic community if it is the fundamental marker of civic obligation. Young (1990) adopts something very close to that view when she endorses the following, superficially appealing criterion of democratic inclusion: "wherever actions affect a plurality of agents. . . all those agents should participate in deciding the actions and their conditions" (p. 251). Unfortunately, in the increasingly interdependent world that globalization is creating, "the plurality of agents" affected by our actions includes just about everyone. Kukathas's response to Young's proposal is on target:

Yet given the state of our interdependence, this would give most of us a right to a say in the affairs of innumerable public and private organizations. Australian farmers would have to have a say in the formulation of US agricultural policy, since the American Export Enhancement Program affects them more directly (and severely) than it does most citizens in the United States. But even within the US it would mean giving business the right to participate in union meetings. . . . In Australia, it would give miners the right to take part in the decision-making processes of the various Aboriginal Land Councils. (Kukathas 1997, pp. 146–47)

This is not to suggest that the makers of US agricultural policy owe nothing to the citizens of other countries or that Aboriginal Land Councils should heed only the interests of their members. That is plainly false precisely because interdependence

creates vulnerabilities and responsibilities that we cannot justly ignore. The point is rather that functioning political associations in which we seek justice for outsiders and insiders alike require other ways of marking boundaries than the promiscuously inclusive idea of interdependence can by itself provide.

Whatever these other ways of marking boundaries would be, the cooperative schemes they circumscribe would be open rather than closed. By “open” I do not only mean that one might enter by means other than birth and exit long before death. I also mean that one’s acknowledged civic responsibilities would link one to the lives of others beyond each particular cooperative scheme in which one might be engaged, often through other such schemes, in a thick web of interdependence and reciprocal obligation that is our global fate. The question then is why should not some of these open political communities be nations, with the aspiration to self-rule that in part defines them? And if they are, why should efforts to elicit a nation-centered patriotism among our children not be a proper part of the process of perpetuating the nation? At the root of much of the antipatriotism currently championed under the banner of cosmopolitanism is the assumption that the more one cares about the nation the less one cares about those who are not conationals, and hence that even the most honorable patriotism is but the beginning of a slippery slope that carries us toward the most noxious chauvinism (Nussbaum 1996, pp. 14–15). But this confuses the intensity of love with how one answers the ethical question of how one should love whatever one loves. Anything of value can be loved intensely but badly, and nations are no exception. Suppose our children learn to think of their nation as an open venture of collective self-rule, in which the right and wrong we do together is as much a matter of how we deal with those who are not compatriots as of how we deal with those who are. Then their patriotism will be proof against the temptations of chauvinism. Such patriotism is not an alternative to cosmopolitan morality but its ally.

In developing her idea of communities of shared fate as the arena for a new, cosmopolitan citizenship, the value of nationality, and even the nation state itself, find a place in Williams’s argument. Williams (2003) acknowledges that “the nation state may well continue to be the most relevant site of citizenship for most people for the foreseeable future.” But she insists that this does not require “affective attachment” to the nation as an imagined community. I think she is right if we interpret this as a strictly conceptual point about the nation-state and the attachments of its citizens. But I doubt that what she calls “legitimate” communities of shared fate—i.e., communities in which the use of collective power would be reliably constrained by a norm of reciprocal justification—could develop and be stabilized in the pervasive absence of affective attachment to the community.

There is a chasm between the bare fact of inescapable mutual interdependence and the creation of open political communities in which collective power is grounded in a norm of reciprocal justification. The first is the human condition; the second is an ideal of political legitimacy we inherit from the Enlightenment. Whatever might be said about the ideal, we know that the communities that might embody it would be difficult and fragile creations. Those who would create or

maintain such communities must reckon with the powerful centrifugal pressures exerted by self-interest, tribal antipathy to out-groups, and the irreducible plurality of human values. That the viability of such communities could be secure in circumstances where no one was affectively attached to them is doubtful, to say the least.

One merit of this line of thought is that it might furnish a moral reason to encourage patriotism in children notwithstanding the above-noted fact that patriotism seems neither strictly necessary nor sufficient for individual political virtue. On this account, patriotism functions as a source of cohesion for communities in which citizens strive together to achieve justice and legitimacy. Absent a concern for justice and legitimacy, patriotism would be without moral value, and where the concern for justice and legitimacy is sufficient to secure just and legitimate outcomes, the absence of patriotism need not trouble us in the least. But political education must concern itself with more than what virtue strictly demands of us; it must also seek to establish the general social and psychological conditions in which virtue is likely to prevail. A widely diffused patriotism may well continue to be one such condition, even in the nonideal conditions of an increasingly interdependent world.

CIVIC EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

Civil Society and Social Capital

Questions about the proper ends of civic education are idle without a plausible account of how they are to be achieved or at least approximated in the real world. Providing such an account is a peculiarly difficult task for liberal—including liberal democratic—theorists because the expansive individual liberties they must respect are not inevitably exercised in ways that contribute to civic educational ends. The central question is aptly posed by Macedo (1996, p. 242): “how do we plan for a citizenry with civic competence while respecting individual freedom?”

The most fashionable contemporary answer appeals to the concept of social capital. According to Putnam (2000, p. 21) social capital “refers to connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” Social capital is a particular way in which (some) social networks are constituted and sustained by the give and take of mutual goodwill and the confident reliance on others’ goodwill that a pattern of mutual benefaction will nourish over time. What Putnam has in mind is evidently not a narrowly egoistic form of reciprocity, though he seems to think that has some role in augmenting social capital. “Even more valuable is *generalized* reciprocity: I’ll do for you without expecting anything specific back from you in the expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road” (Putnam 2000, p. 21, original italics). Putnam now distinguishes between “inward-looking and outward-looking” and “bridging and bonding” social capital. A group is inward-looking to the extent that it concerns itself with the exclusive good of its own members; it is outward-looking

so far as it seeks to benefit others beyond the group. “Bonding social capital brings together people who are like one another in important respects (ethnicity, age, gender, social class, and so on), whereas bridging social capital brings together people who are unlike one another” (Putnam & Goss 2002, p. 112). Such categories are useful to the extent that they help to identify forms of associational life that might be particularly fecund settings for the growth of civic virtue, and Putnam’s scheme has some interesting affinities with influential contemporary accounts of civic virtue.

“Generalized reciprocity” is both the normative core of social capital and a cardinal civic virtue for deliberative democrats and political liberals. To be sure, normative theorists emphasize the internal connection of reciprocity in public deliberation to the justice and legitimacy of the polity, whereas Putnam stresses its significance as a widely diffused social norm. That is an important difference. Mutual goodwill can obviously thrive in many areas of social cooperation without becoming established as a justificatory norm in politics in anything like the ways that Rawls or Gutmann envisages. Still, the appeal to reciprocity as a justificatory norm is an extension of generalized reciprocity, and without a civil society in which generalized reciprocity has a wide influence, the prospects of that extension being made might be negligible. Similarly, a primary task of civic education will be to encourage the generalization of reciprocity outward toward the boundaries of citizenship, and social capital that is both outward-looking and bridges the most worrying social cleavages in a given society—race and class, say—may be a particularly propitious vehicle for that process. We do know much empirically about the tendency to polarize in “enclave deliberation” within homogeneous social groups—i.e., groups that cannot yield much bridging social capital, in Putnam’s terms (Sunstein 2001, pp. 13–47). So far as democracy needs social conditions that enable principled compromise and accommodation, venues that countervail these polarizing effects are of prime importance. This is not to say that other forms of social capital might not be valuable for specific civic purposes: inward-looking ethnic associations with few bridges to the wider community might still play a critical role in crystallizing the political interests of otherwise marginalized citizens. Judgments about the role of social capital as a vehicle of civic education must be made with a close eye to context, but Putnam’s formal categories may yet be a useful way of bringing many relevant contingencies into focus.

These remarks on the relations between social capital and citizenship are tinged with speculation, and perhaps they must remain so because the empirical study of social capital is fraught with such daunting methodological difficulties (Norris 2002, pp. 140–49). But a deeper concern here is that associational life cannot be construed as just so much raw material for the politics of moral uplift. That concern motivates Rosenblum’s attack on the “transmission belt” model of civil society. First, the dispositions learned in one association do not automatically spill over into others: “It is one thing to say that within face-to-face rotating credit associations ‘social networks allow trust to become transitive and spread: I trust you, because

you trust her and she assures me that she trusts you,' and quite another thing to show that habits of trust cultivated in one social sphere are exhibited in incongruent groups in other spheres" (Rosenblum 1998, p. 48). Second, the transmission-belt model ignores the fact that a given association can have morally valuable uses that offset rather than reiterate the values learned in others:

The lessons of one affiliation may provide countervailing force for the formative effects of another area of social life. Or they may compensate for the deficits and deprivations suffered outside; membership is a sort of reparation. Or associations may provide an outlet for dispositions unacceptable in other areas. After all, it is simply not the case that labor in an authoritarian workplace produces incorrigibly submissive character, or that observant Roman Catholics are ritualistic, Orthodox Jews legalistic, and followers of charismatic ministers enthusiastic in every domain.

We have overwhelming evidence that individuals exercise capacities for discrimination and moral adaptation all the time, even among seemingly close situations. This includes a refined capacity to resist spillover. Indeed, part of "the discipline of culture" is to discriminate among associations. (Rosenblum 1998, p. 49)

The transmission-belt model of civil society is both psychologically naive and illiberal. It underestimates our capacity to learn civic virtues as a role-specific moral repertoire, and it tempts us to think of civil society as empty or threatening cultural space that must be colonized by the liberal state in order to secure the norms of citizenship. Macedo's question cannot be answered in these terms.

Still, citizenship is plainly not an entirely discrete social sphere in which wholesome habits and capabilities can thrive regardless of what is learned elsewhere in citizens' lives. Rosenblum (1998) certainly supposes no such thing: "Liberal democracy is more than a framework prized for its hospitality to pluralism. It embodies political ideals that associational life ideally supports, if only indirectly" (p. 43). That being so, we need to ask about the kinds of social capital different associations are liable to generate and to consider what role the state might permissibly play in fostering those kinds of social capital that are especially promising as supports for civic virtue. That need does not go away just because an automatic transfer of learning would be foolish to expect and a uniform congruity with liberal democratic norms oppressive to demand.

The Civic Purposes of Schooling

If a liberal state has any business in promoting civic educational ends, it will surely be in state-sponsored schools. Yet this topic is especially difficult to address in abstraction from the particularities of liberal democratic societies, where constitutional variation as well as differences in political culture and educational tradition may affect profoundly what the state can feasibly or desirably do to advance civic purposes in schools. For convenience, I concentrate on the United States.

The need to forge a cohesive civic identity among a diverse population was critical to the inception of the American schooling system, and even now ordinary Americans continue to value the school's role in teaching civic skills more highly, for example, than Europeans do (Hochschild & Scovronick 2002, p. 20). Education has also had a distinctively important role as the social right that secures access to "the American dream," now usually understood in terms of material prosperity and occupancy of those social roles (which typically have substantial educational prerequisites) that maximize economic opportunity. In a society that offers little else in the way of a welfare state, and where poverty is the almost inevitable fate of the poorly educated, the quality of state-sponsored schooling takes on a momentous personal importance for parents and children. Parental anxieties about downward social mobility as well as hopes for its upward counterpart are apt to crowd out more exalted considerations in policy debate. But the ideology of American state-sponsored schooling has remained resolutely egalitarian. From the beginning, only "public" schools would be funded by the state, and these would be "common" schools in a certain sense. At least at the level of democratic faith, that remains true today.

The institution of the public school and the ideal of the common school are typically conflated. But the distinction between the two matters a lot. Three things make public schools public: They are more or less wholly funded by the state; they are open to the children of all who reside within a defined attendance zone surrounding the school; and they are created and operated through some combination of state and local political authority. The public school is thus defined by who pays for its services, who has access to those services, and who determines their content and delivery. By contrast, the common school is defined by who goes there and what they learn there. Consider the following passage, extracted from a decision by the Kansas Supreme Court:

The tendency of the time is, and has been for several years, to abolish all conditions on account of race, or color. . .and to make all persons absolutely equal before the law. . . . At the common school, where both sexes and all kinds of children mingle together, we have the great world in miniature; there they may learn human nature in all its phases, with all its emotions, passions, and feelings, its loves and hates, its hopes and fears. . . . But on the other hand, persons by isolation may become strangers even in their own country; and by being strangers, will be of but little benefit either to themselves or to society. (Quoted in Kousser 1991, p. 215)

Unless you have a very good eye for nineteenth-century prose, you might guess that this was written some years after *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. In fact, the passage comes from a decision made in 1881 against racial segregation in Kansas schools, written by Judge Daniel Valentine. The passage makes clear why I call the common school an ideal, and why I want to distinguish it from public schooling. Although Valentine professes confidence in the impetus of American history toward political equality and comity, he is mindful that the

common school as he depicts it is an object of moral aspiration rather than a current achievement. After all, the very circumstances of the case demonstrate that the institutional reality of public schooling in Kansas and the inspiring image of “the great world in miniature” remained remote from each other. Valentine was writing after the legislative and judicial tide had turned decisively against federal efforts to overturn white supremacy in the South. These facts lend some poignancy to his appeal to the “tendency of the times,” an appeal that says much more about his own besieged political faith than any discernible empirical truth.

The ideal to which Valentine appeals joins together two ideas: what might be called the distinctive demographic profile of the common school and its distinctive curriculum. The common school is a place where “children of all kinds” mingle together, transforming it into a demographic microcosm of the diverse society it serves. This “great world in miniature” is also a site for pursuing certain shared educational ends: Children learn to understand each other across the cleavages that divide them and in so doing become civic friends rather than strangers in their own country. Central to American faith in common schooling is the idea that its distinctive demographic profile is necessary to achieve the ends of its distinctive curriculum. Borrowing Putnam’s vocabulary, we might describe it as the vehicle of outward-looking, bridging social capital par excellence.

Public schools are not necessarily wedded to the ideal of common schooling. You might say that they are at least *de jure* common schools because they are open to all in the geographically defined communities they serve. But even that is false so far as those communities do not themselves constitute microcosms of “the great world” to which Valentine alludes. The pervasiveness of racial and class segregation in urban America makes it inevitable that the neighborhood school is often the racial and socioeconomic enclave in miniature. Invoking the hallowed image of the common school that embraces all future citizens is still a routine rhetorical move in the defense of public education. But our rhetoric deceives us. The evolution of residential patterns in the United States throughout the twentieth century created profound spatial fragmentation along the fissures of race and class, and the trend toward segregation continues (Rae 1999, 2001). The *Brown* decision did nothing to change that; it merely signified the end of *de jure* racial segregation. In these circumstances, the neighborhood school is generally the very antithesis of the common school: a mirror to one fragment of a racially and economically disjointed world.

The defense of public education in the United States often assumes at least a rough congruence between the institution of the public school and the ideal of the common school. That is unfortunate because it makes the civic justification of state partiality for public schools seem easier than it really is. Suppose common schools are as potent an instrument of civic virtue as their adherents have argued. Nevertheless, there may not be a great distinction, from a civic viewpoint, between policies that restrict state funding to public schools that are racial and socioeconomic enclaves and policies (such as school vouchers) that would extend support to private schools that are religious enclaves as well. Whether widely available voucher

programs that sponsor access to religious schools would exacerbate racial segregation is not clear, though some controversial evidence suggests that they might even have the opposite effect (Greene 1998). Much research does indicate that public schools can claim no current advantage over religious private schools in the quality of the civic instruction they provide (Niemi & Junn 1998; Campbell 2001).

Promising initiatives have been taken in a few American school districts to steer public schooling toward the common school ideal, and these suggest ideas for reform that might be tried on a larger scale (Century Foundation 2002). But whether these reforms can succeed against traditions of localism and middle-class parents' anxieties about maintaining competitive educational advantages for their children is uncertain.

If the common school ideal has such uncertain prospects in America, it is all the more important to consider how shared civic educational ends might be prosecuted in schools that remain more or less homogeneous enclaves of one sort or another. Can the distinctive curriculum of the common school be decoupled from its demographic profile? That is an empirical question, and some would argue that a sanguine answer can confidently be given already (Salamone 2000). Yet the demise of the common school tradition cannot be viewed with complacency. There is empirical evidence that Americans badly lack the kind of mutual understanding and civic friendship that the common school ideal was intended to serve. American citizens tend to assume that the common good is transparently clear, so that inclusive deliberation is unnecessary to discern its requirements; that political conflict is a sign of selfish interests impeding that good; and that compromise and accommodation in law making are indicative of unprincipled bargaining and corruption (Hibbing & Thiess-Morse 2002). It is hard to imagine beliefs less conducive to mutual respect and civility in conditions of deepening cultural diversity. Their prevalence can scarcely be explained by the failure of the common school ideal, but their prevalence might make us wary of policy proposals that could make children of different races, religions, and social classes even less likely to learn together as they grow up.

LEGITIMACY AND CIVIC EDUCATION

The rightful limits of state power constrain what the state is permitted to do in pursuing the ends of civic education. The precise identification of those limits will vary among competing normative conceptions of what constitutes a free society. But because any recognizably liberal democratic theory must acknowledge very substantial limits to state power, legitimacy is bound to loom large in any minimally adequate account of the state's role in civic education.

Brighouse (1998) has argued against any state action intended to promote civic virtue on the grounds that such action will inevitably be directed to ensure the state's survival rather than its legitimacy, thereby corrupting the processes of belief and preference formation that legitimating consent to political authority presupposes. Brighouse's argument is perhaps overblown (Callan 2000), but his scruples about

the susceptibility of state-mandated civic education to corruption are well taken. Those scruples have a venerable pedigree in liberal democratic tradition. If any role for the state in determining the content of education will, as John Stuart Mill believed, install a “despotism over the mind, leading by natural tendency to one over the body,” then a free people cannot cede any such role to the state [Mill 1976 (1869), p. 129].

Suppose we agree that state power in education is liable to induce a despotism over the mind. Are we to assume that concentrations of power in other institutional settings are necessarily less dangerous? Socialization in families and the associations of civil society will in many instances tend to produce a mental despotism because the inequalities of power they embody lend themselves to abuse. When the combination of ignorance and prejudice that renders future citizens incapable of contributing to serious democratic deliberation is a consequence of what their parents, rather than the state, taught or failed to teach them, it is no less a curtailment of freedom. The point here is not that states can always be trusted not to abuse educational authority; the point is rather that nobody can. The best distribution of educational authority, given either democratic or liberal ends, cannot be determined *a priori* because there is no *a priori* truth about the trustworthiness of institutional kinds (Raz 1986, pp. 427–28). But in general there may be strong *prima facie* reasons to favor a sharing of authority among parents, state, and perhaps the teaching profession in that the partiality of one might counterbalance that of the others (Gutmann 1987, pp. 41–47; Shapiro 1999, pp. 64–109).

Even if some institution or combination of institutions could be trusted completely to promote public virtue, liberal toleration would still require forbearance toward ways of life that go against the grain of such virtue. Toleration is an ideal we rightly invoke in marking the boundaries of basic liberties that are not contingent on whether their bearers are paragons of civic-mindedness or not. This is not the place to rehearse all the moral reasons that shape the practice of toleration. But prominent among them is our determination to minimize the suffering and humiliation we impose on people when we severely disrupt a cherished way of life, even if it falls far short of the high demands of public virtue (Strike 1998, p. 358). To impose those demands, on the assumption that the triumph of public virtue will always justify the costs of coercion, would be to engage in self-defeating civic education by violating the toleration that lies at the core of liberal tradition.

Nevertheless, registering the importance of legitimacy in constraining the state’s educational role is not a sufficient basis for understanding the full range of that role. Consider what we should want from a normative theory of civic education. It should tell us about the limits of what is politically tolerable in matters of children’s teaching and learning. The relevant question here might be this: What forms of (mis)education violate the basic rights of children or inculcate group hatred or other attitudes inimical to the most elementary moral responsibilities of citizenship? This question has been neglected in American educational discourse—including the recent work of normative theorists. A background assumption has been that serious state regulation of education outside the public system is simply not to

be expected [an honorable exception is Reich (2002)]. But a normative theory of civic education should do more than help us to fix the boundaries of a minimally adequate education. It should also furnish at least a partial conception of the *best* education by prescribing a range of civic virtues as ideal educational ends, as well as practices conducive to their realization. The two desiderata must not be confused. One way of bringing out the differences between them is to compare the roles of individual autonomy in arguments about what is educationally tolerable and in arguments about what is educationally best.

Arguments about what is tolerable will rightly inform whatever policies the state enforces in the regulation of all schools, whether they are public or private, funded or unfunded by government. If autonomy is relevant here, it has to be a modest conception that pertains to basic conditions of independent or nonservile agency (Callan 1997, pp. 152–59; Lomasky 1987, pp. 182–87). Otherwise we assume that ways of life inconsistent with some more or less sophisticated ideal of autonomous development are politically intolerable, and that surely runs counter to deep intuitions about the limits of legitimate government. On the other hand, a theory of what educational practices are best, as opposed to merely tolerable, might appeal to autonomy in a more ambitious way. If, for example, a demanding ideal of autonomy is implicated in the case for a more deliberative citizenship, along the lines canvassed by Gutmann and others, then to the extent that the case succeeds, autonomy in that more onerous sense is integral to the best civic education. Arguments about the best education are politically relevant to deliberation about the less invasive ways in which the state might intervene in the formation of future citizens—e.g., debate about the terms on which state sponsorship might be extended to private schools rather than debate about the terms on which they are to be tolerated. Obviously, much more could be said about this. But the distinction between the tolerable and the best shows how an exacting conception of the ends of civic education leaves ample room for respect for liberty and the rightful limits of government. To the extent that the ends can be prosecuted in a manner tempered by such respect, liberal worries about self-defeating civic education can be allayed.

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LATINO POLITICS

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■ **Abstract** This review addresses key issues in the study of Latino politics. Foremost among these is the question of low voter turnout. Such factors as income, education, nativity, religion, political party, organizational involvement, neighborhood composition, ethnic attachments, and mobilization of Hispanic turnout have a limited impact on Hispanic votes. I suggest that this is due to differences in the political socialization of Latinos and Anglos. The review also shows that immigrants are focused on U.S. politics rather than home-country politics. Additionally, it describes significant differences regarding the factors that shape Hispanic versus Anglo partisanship. Among the other issues considered is the limited significance of ethnic factors, as compared to partisanship and state of residence, in determining electoral and policy preferences.

LATINO POLITICS

Population increase is the foundation of the developing scholarly and popular interest in Latino¹ politics. This began when the release of the 1980 U.S. census documented the first wave of what would become a continuous, massive inflow of Latino immigrants. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of Hispanics in the United States increased from 9.6 to 14.6 million. Because of immigration, high birth rates among the second generation, and a substantial Mexican- and Puerto Rican–origin native-born population, by 2002, the Bureau of the Census reported that Latinos totaled 38.8 million, which makes them the nation’s largest minority.

Beginning in the 1980s, political parties and other institutions became attentive to the potential political consequences of these new numbers. Political science as a discipline, however, has been slow to focus its attention on how this growing population might affect the polity. Do the models that govern the analysis of the

¹Although activists and academics have continuously and sometimes bitterly debated whether to use “Hispanic” or “Latino” to refer to the nation’s Spanish-surnamed population, I use these terms interchangeably here. I know of no systematic evidence that documents politically relevant differences at the elite or mass level between those who use one label and those who use the other.

population as a whole, or of subgroups such as African Americans, explain Hispanic political behavior? Do well-established theories of immigrant incorporation apply to Latinos? Do Latino attitudes about foreign policy and public policy in general reflect American values, or are they rooted in and linked to the values and interests of Latinos' countries of origin? Rather than address such questions, the discipline has, until very recently, been uninterested in the Hispanic political world. This attitude is beginning to change. *P.S.: Political Science and Politics* published a review of Latino politics literature in 2000 (Symposium 2000). Moreover, there is finally sufficient research on Latino public opinion to merit a chapter in a leading public opinion text (Uhlmanher & García 2002).

Because of the discipline's recently developed interest, the relevant literature is fledgling rather than mature. The remainder of this essay reviews what we know and what we need to learn about major aspects of Hispanic politics. It draws almost exclusively on political science literature published since 1990, when the most significant theoretical and substantive advances in the field began to develop. Those interested in a broader range of earlier literature should turn to *Latinos and Politics: A Selected Research Bibliography* (García et al. 1991).

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

Theorizing about Latino political life has focused on whether the Latino political experience can be accommodated within the traditional pluralist model or whether it requires a distinct approach. Fuch's (1990) encyclopedic *The American Kaleidoscope* strongly argues for the former. Hero (1992) rejects this approach and argues instead that Latinos confront "two-tiered pluralism"; his model recognizes that even though Latinos have increased their political standing, there are strong limits to the amount of political power they can attain and to the arenas in which they may exercise it. Hero also acknowledges that the group's political experiences vary as a function of national origin, and this makes theorizing about "Latinos" extremely hazardous.

A second question concerns the validity of panethnic concepts such as Latino or Hispanic. Do these labels serve merely instrumental purposes, or do they reflect a new political identity? Jones-Correa & Leal (1996) find that the rise of panethnic identity is associated with a decline in ethnic attachments. In other words, those who identify exclusively as panethnics are more supportive of using English and less supportive of bilingual education than those who primarily or exclusively utilize national origin labels. Furthermore, panethnic identifiers tend to be older and better educated and have a longer generational history in the United States. In sum, it seems that the characteristics usually associated with assimilation predict panethnic identification. Does the continued increase of Hispanic/Latino identifiers indicate that Latino politics is indeed following the pluralist model, as Fuchs (1990) argued?

The consequences of renewed attacks on immigrants or on the use of Spanish, both of which Latinos usually perceive as attacks on the group as a whole, must be

evaluated before answering this question. Current efforts by both major parties to woo Hispanic voters suggest that such attacks are unlikely to be carried out by leaders of either party. Nonetheless, desperate candidates could emulate former California governor Pete Wilson in using such issues to polarize the electorate and mobilize Anglo² voters against Latinos. The likelihood of such tactics could (and should) be tested by developing models to estimate their probable electoral outcome.

The debate regarding theories of Latino incorporation is also complicated by the different experiences of the national origin groups that constitute the Hispanic population. Contrary to the pattern described above, Cubans, the most structurally incorporated group, are the least likely to identify as Hispanics (Jones-Correa & Leal 1996). Shorris (in Moreno 1996, p. 147) suggests this is because, although they have experienced racist discrimination, Cubans “identify with the conquerors (Anglos), not with the conquered (Latinos). . . .” Puerto Rican analysts are especially attentive to this debate (Melendez 2003), perhaps because they hope that its resolution will suggest how to explain and deal with the seemingly intractable social problems that plague Puerto Ricans on both the mainland and the island (Cruz 2003).

Although analysts historically struggled with competing theoretical explanations of the Mexican American political experience (García & de la Garza 1977), today most emphasize the issues that are at the core of mainstream behavioral and policy analysis. Implicit in this work is the view that there are no longer major institutional obstacles explicitly restricting Mexican American access to governmental institutions and the electoral system (Guerra 1998). Indeed, Mexican American political incorporation is so institutionalized that questions regarding how to conceptualize the role of Mexican Americans in contemporary politics are largely restricted to a few case studies that explore the extent to which Mexican American local office holders can reorient public policy to benefit the urban poor at the expense of white middle and upper classes (Regalado 1997, Rosales 2000). Because these critiques acknowledge but do not incorporate the complexities of modern political economies and the constraints local leaders face (Peterson 1981, Stone 1989), they resemble populist appeals more closely than scholarly analysis.

These patterns notwithstanding, there are new issues that may change the nature of the relationship between Latinos and the polity. For example, negative reactions to future immigration could lead to the establishment of new barriers to Latino incorporation and the creation of a new and permanent Latino underclass whose very existence would require reexamining Latino-white relations. Similar results could ensue from demands for explicit state support for cultural reproduction, such as exists in Australia (Jupp 1992). Such developments could easily lead to more polarized relations between Latinos and Anglos and would surely jeopardize the continued applicability of a pluralistic approach as the lens through which to examine Latino political life. In sum, although it now seems that Latino incorporation

²“Anglo” and “white” are used interchangeably to refer to individuals identified as non-Hispanic whites by the U.S. census.

is finally on a path that resembles the one followed historically by the Irish and other European ethnics, the ability of Hispanics and the state to maintain this trajectory will be severely tested by future tensions rooted in continuing demographic developments.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

The utility of a pluralistic approach to explain Latino political life is demonstrated by the fact that Hispanic political values and attitudes are closer to those of Anglos than to those prevalent in their historical countries of origin. For example, Mexican American views of democracy are typical of Americans and differ from those of Mexicans (de la Garza & Yetim 2003). Furthermore, as Latinos become more settled into American society, they develop more realistic views of the polity and society; for instance, they become less trusting, and they recognize that ethnic discrimination is an institutionalized societal practice (de la Garza 1995; Michelson 2001, 2003a; Michelson & García 2003; Portes & Bach 1985).

That Latino political attitudes are shaped by American attitudes is evident in how partisanship develops among immigrants. The acquisition of party identification is positively associated with years of residence in the United States but is negatively associated with age. This suggests that partisanship among Latino immigrants is acquired principally from experiences with the polity rather than from new social roles that immigrants take on as a function of aging (Wong 2001). Relatedly, the party with which most Latino immigrants tend to identify and the intensity of their identification also reflect their experiences with American political institutions. Given that the Democratic Party has long been associated with minorities and the “working class” and that Latino immigrants fit within both categories, it is not surprising that significantly more identify as Democrats than as Republicans (Cain et al. 1991).

These patterns give rise to questions about the effects of home-country experiences on the acquisition of American values. That the Cuban community has been so intolerant of those who disagree with them regarding relations with the Castro regime suggests that experiences in countries of origin may significantly affect which mainstream values Hispanic immigrant groups learn and accept. Do immigrants from more open societies more easily accept democratic values? What types of values are learned most rapidly and which are the least likely to be accepted? The answers to such questions will increase our understanding of adult socialization and will generate insights into the potential impact of continued immigration on the nation’s political life.

ELECTORAL AND NONELECTORAL BEHAVIOR

Because 39% of Hispanics are noncitizen adults and therefore ineligible to vote, nonelectoral activities are much more significant to Hispanics than to other segments of the nation’s population. Such activities not only provide the only

mechanisms available to noncitizens for making their preferences known, but also can stimulate the development of local civic institutions that produce social capital, which strengthens neighborhoods and empowers ethnic groups. Furthermore, nonelectoral behavior in the form of organizational involvement is highly correlated with electoral involvement among Latinos, just as it is among Anglos (Diaz 1996).

The principal sources for analyzing participation in nonelectoral activities are the LNPS and the Citizen Participation Study (Verba et al. 1995). The latter describes Hispanic nonelectoral involvement as slightly lower than that of African Americans and considerably lower than Anglos', but the study emphasizes that this pattern reflects differences in human capital such as education and income and is not intrinsically a function of ethnicity. Diaz (1996) indicates that Latinos' rate of involvement with nonprofit organizations is comparable to that of African Americans but much lower than that of Anglos.

In their analysis of the LNPS, Hero & Campbell (1996) also find differences across nationality groups. Surprisingly, Cubans have the lowest rates of nonelectoral participation and, despite having much higher incomes, are the least likely to make contributions to political or social causes. Moreover, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans are more likely than Anglos to attend political rallies, and they are more active than Cubans in other activities as well.

Analyses of Puerto Rican nonelectoral engagement reenforce LNPS results. Melendez (2003), for example, argues that Puerto Ricans are much less politically active than whites or blacks, which Torres (1995) argues is a legacy of patterns of return migration and the role of the Office of the Commonwealth among New York Puerto Ricans. Melendez challenges Torres' argument, noting that there are few sojourners among Puerto Ricans who have lived in the United States at least ten years and that there is no evidence that return migration impedes the political engagement in Puerto Rico of those who do return. Furthermore, the island-born are less likely to engage in politically relevant activities than are those born on the mainland (Stokes 2003). In summary, although we know that the nonelectoral behavior rates of mainland Puerto Ricans are low, we have few insights into why.

It is significant that foreign-born citizens resemble the native-born in their rates of nonelectoral involvement (DeSipio 1996a). DeSipio et al. (2003) show that, regardless of national origin, Hispanic immigrants have very low rates of civic engagement.

Qualitative studies on nonelectoral involvement should complement survey-based research by analyzing the development and impact of community-based organizations. Three that make this contribution are Marquez's *LULAC* (Marquez 1993), his study of San Antonio's Industrial Areas Foundation (Marquez 1990), and Warren's *Dry Bones Rattling* (Warren 2001). The first of these utilizes incentive theory to explain the evolution of the League of United Latin American Citizens from the nation's most historically significant mass-based Mexican American organization to its current status as a much smaller group that depends on corporate and foundation support. His study of Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS), the Alinsky organization in San Antonio, Texas, describes COPS's

successful development in terms of its parish-based foundation and limited reformist policy agenda. *Dry Bones Rattling* provides a comprehensive analysis of COPS's successes and the problems it faces in dealing with non-Mexican American groups situated outside of South Texas, in leadership development and in institutionalizing consensual democracy as COPS's governing rule.

The failure of much of the urban politics literature to describe the development of such grassroots organizations and their roles in effecting local changes is a major weakness in the study of Hispanic political life. As specialists on urban politics (Erie 1994), San Antonio (Booth 1994), and Los Angeles (Cain 1994, Guerra 1994) point out, Skerry's (1993) study of San Antonio and Los Angeles illustrates this failure.

Except for Bridges' (1997) work, the field of American political development (APD), which has established a tradition of rigorous qualitative inquiry, has made virtually no contribution to the study of the institutional foundations of Hispanic politics. APD specialists would do well to consider how the politics of territorial expansion in the Southwest and Puerto Rico has affected both Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans. Latinos committed to qualitative research would benefit equally from immersing themselves in this approach.

ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

Historically, Hispanics—and Mexican Americans in particular—had to overcome numerous discriminatory institutional barriers before they could exercise their voting rights (Brischetto et al. 1994). Thanks to the 1975 Voting Rights Act and the efforts of the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SWVRP) and its Puerto Rican counterpart, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF), those institutional barriers began tumbling with accelerating speed by the late 1970s. As DeSipio's (1996b) signpost study shows, the new environment produced by those changes, combined with increased immigration, resulted in the creation of what may be considered a new Hispanic electorate.

Despite the virtual elimination of the old barriers, other less obvious obstacles remain. For example, the lack of Election Day registration disproportionately reduces Latino turnout relative to Anglo turnout (Alvarez & Ansolabehere 2002). Because of such obstacles and other factors, Hispanic electoral influence continues to lag behind the promise of its population size. That is, because Latinos vote at lower rates than Anglos, their influence on electoral outcomes has never attained its full potential in major mayoral or state-wide elections. DeSipio (1996b) disaggregates the native-born and the naturalized citizens to show why this problem is not diminished and may be exacerbated by continuous immigration.

Efforts to explain these voting patterns initially relied on a standard socioeconomic status (SES) model. Contemporary Latino electoral research goes beyond that to include variables such as organizational involvement and various dimensions of ethnicity, e.g., neighborhood composition and the candidate's nationality.

Like other Americans, Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans involved with organizations vote at impressively higher rates than those who are not members of any group (Diaz 1996). Because the effect of memberships is greater among these Latinos than it is among Anglos, this helps reduce the gap in voting rate between Latinos and Anglos. Curiously, Diaz found that organizational involvement had no impact on Cuban political participation. However, as noted above, Hispanic organizational involvement is low, and thus the impact of group memberships on Latino participation as a whole is quite limited.

Applying the standard SES model is, nonetheless, essential to show the similarities and differences in the factors that influence Hispanic and Anglo voting. Although there is no doubt that low SES is a major factor in low Latino turnout, even studies that control for SES find that Latinos vote less than Anglos (Michelson 2003b). Also indicative of the complexity of explaining Hispanic voting are contradictory findings on the effects of variables whose impact is much more straightforward regarding Anglos. Arvisu & García (1996) and DeSipio (1996b) find that age is positively associated with Latino voting, as it is in the general population, whereas Hritzuk & Park (2000) find no association between age and voting. Also, Arvisu & García note that education does not uniformly boost turnout, especially in the case of Cubans.

Hritzuk & Park (2000) further imply that Latino voting suffers because immigration continuously adds to the number of Hispanic citizens who are not well socialized into the electoral system. It is noteworthy, however, that feeling efficacious or viewing voting as a duty or symbolic act rather than as an instrument for changing conditions—attitudes more common among immigrants than among the native-born—leads to higher turnout rates (Michelson 2000a,b; Lien 1994).

It is especially significant that historical or contemporary discrimination has no effect on turnout (Clark & Morrison 1995, Leighley 2001, Michelson 2000a, Uhlaner 1996). Lien (1994), however, reports that perceiving discrimination against their group stimulates Mexican Americans to vote and engage in other participatory activities. Curiously, however, he notes that a sense of deprivation, i.e., perceiving that one's group has fewer opportunities, does not mobilize Mexican Americans.

These patterns raise questions about the utility of the relational goods argument (Uhlaner 1989) to explain high turnout in heavily concentrated Latino neighborhoods. This claim is that concentration generates a set of incentives that benefits group members but can only be realized through highly concentrated Latino neighborhoods. Thus, Latinos in such neighborhoods will vote at higher rates than will those living in low-density areas. A related version of this claim is that high-density neighborhoods are linked through geographically overlapping majority-minority districts such that "get out the vote" (GOTV) campaigns in one stimulate turnout in others.

The evidence regarding the effects of concentration is contradictory. It is strongly supported by Leighley (2001), but her work focuses on Texas and, more significantly, offers no longitudinal perspective. De la Garza et al. (2001/2002) have

an even narrower geographic focus, but their research spans turnout over eight years. They track individual turnout in presidential, congressional, and state-level elections in Houston, Texas from 1992 through 1998 via official records and show that turnout rates are lower for citizens in highly concentrated precincts. Additionally, the results of case studies that examine electoral mobilization in highly concentrated Hispanic districts in Houston, Miami, and Los Angeles (de la Garza et al. 1993), case studies of turnout in majority-minority (highly concentrated) districts in Texas (Cotrell 1997), and more general studies of race-based districting (Weber 2000) challenge Leighley's results.

Two factors that may help disentangle these contradictory patterns are Hispanic voters' experiences of discrimination and the significance of partisanship versus ethnicity in their voting decisions. It is reasonable to assume that the significance of relational benefits secured through voting would increase as perceptions of discrimination increase. Numerous sources report, however, that most Latinos report relatively low levels of discrimination. In 1990, 39% of Mexican Americans said they personally had experienced discrimination (de la Garza et al. 1992). Puerto Ricans reported substantially higher rates, and by 1999 two thirds reported they had personally experienced discrimination (Uhlanger & García 2002). However, the 2000 Knight Ridder/San Jose Mercury News survey found that only 18% of Latinos reported having experienced discrimination in the five years prior to the survey (Uhlanger & García 2002). In Chicago, only 6% of the city's Latinos mentioned racism and discrimination as a local concern, whereas 24% cited these as national problems (Michelson 2000a). Discrimination, in summary, does not appear to be so pervasive as to motivate Hispanic citizens to band together and vote in pursuit of a common electoral agenda, as Latino advocates expect.

The LNPS also shows that Latinos do not automatically rally behind coethnic candidates. When asked whom they voted for when choosing between an Hispanic and a non-Hispanic candidate, they said they voted for the "best candidate" rather than the ethnic candidate. Nonetheless, when given an option between a Latino and non-Latino, 77% supported the former (Graves & Lee 2000). This choice, it must be emphasized, does not necessarily contradict their initial preference. Nonetheless, as a commitment to supporting coethnics would predict, Texas Mexican Americans have relatively low roll off in down ballot elections in which a Mexican American and Anglo are competing (Polinard et al. 1991). On the other hand, Graves & Lee (2000), like Cain et al. (1991), show that ethnicity does not have a direct impact on vote choice. Further documenting this pattern is Michelson's analysis of the 2000 election in California's twentieth district, in which 70%–80% of Latinos voted in favor of the winning Anglo candidate over a highly visible Hispanic Republican. The author's conclusion is that Hispanics want representatives who will help them, and they see the Democratic Party as presenting those candidates (Michelson 2002b).

The argument that geographically overlapping majority-minority districts increase turnout is essentially a refinement of Leighley's argument. The innovative aspect of this work is the attempt to show a synergistic relationship in turnout

among the various types of districts that overlap, that is, to show that increased turnout in one district leads to increases in others (Barreto et al. 2002).

This argument suffers from the key weaknesses of Leighley's work as well as from additional problems. The authors, for example, fail to explain why their results differ from those showing that majority-minority districts dampen turnout in Texas and elsewhere. It is even more noteworthy that Barreto et al. (2002) fail to reconcile the results of work coauthored by Pantoja (Pantoja & Woods 1999), a coauthor of the paper discussed here, that finds that GOTV and mobilization campaigns had little positive impact on turnout in the kinds of communities that make up overlapping majority-minority communities such as those included in this research. The final and perhaps most significant additional criticism is one that Barreto et al. (2002) acknowledge only in passing but is well documented by Barreto & Woods (2003). That is, Latino voters in Southern California, the focus of this study, have been highly politicized by referenda directly dealing with immigrants, bilingual education, and affirmative action. This contributed to increased Hispanic turnout in 1996 and 1998. In 2000, what may have been the most effective Latino GOTV campaigns in the nation were implemented by labor unions and independent Latino advocacy groups in California (de la Garza et al. 2002). In short, Latinos in Southern California live in a unique political environment. Barreto et al. (2002) do not adequately control for the effects of these factors on turnout, and without such controls, their claims regarding the synergistic effects of overlapping majority-minority districts remain unsubstantiated. However, these claims should be considered as a creative hypothesis in need of future testing.

Given these consistent low turnout patterns, how can Latino turnout be increased? From a social science perspective, this question demands new and perhaps unique models that will take us past the logjam we currently confront. From a policy perspective, increasing turnout means finding mechanisms for making government more attentive to the needs of this growing population.

A step in that direction may involve responding to the suggestion (implicit in Hritzuk & Park 2000) that Latino turnout is negatively affected by the continuous incorporation of citizens who are not fully socialized into electoral politics. In keeping with this hypothesis, Leal's (1999) finding that military experience has a significantly greater impact on political attitudes and voting among Hispanics than among Anglos shows that as Latinos learn about government, i.e., increase their levels of political socialization, they become more involved with it. The downsizing of the professional military, however, means that as fewer Latinos serve in the military, the number who become politically engaged as a result of that experience will decline. This may cause a drop in overall Hispanic engagement with the political system unless other institutions substitute for the military to perform its historic socialization function.

Religious organizations are the prime candidate to fill this role. Because the great majority of Hispanics are Catholics, this responsibility primarily falls to the Catholic Church, but the evidence has suggested it does not serve a socialization function (Hritzuk & Park 2000, Verba et al. 1995).

Recent work challenges these findings. Jones-Correa & Leal (2000) suggest that Verba et al. (1995) misfocused their analysis by examining differences in the acquisition of civic skills among ethnic groups, when their focus should instead be on the acquisition of civic skills based on differences in religious denomination. Jones-Correa & Leal (2000) find that church attendance, regardless of denomination, is positively associated with higher levels of turnout, but that differences in denomination explain little about Latino and Anglo political participation. The most significant finding of this research is that being Catholic has a significant and positive impact on turnout in congressional and school board elections. Jones-Correa & Leal (2000) go on to argue that in the absence of other institutions, churches are disproportionately important to Latino civic life and, given their ethnic nature, Latino parishes have the potential to serve as centers for political mobilizing—as evidenced by the success of COPS (Warren 2001).

Lee et al.'s (2002) analysis of a religious survey of 2060 adults completed in 2000 by the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) also leads them to rebut Verba et al. (1995), as well as key elements of the Jones-Correa & Leal argument. Contrary to the latter, they find that church attendance has no effect on electoral participation; the only religious variable that has a positive effect on turnout is a born-again experience. Lee et al. (2002) also find that neither skills learned through participation in church activities nor church-based mobilization significantly affects turnout. Their failure to find turnout differences between Catholics and mainline Protestants, along with the finding that evangelicals and other “Christians” vote less than Latino Catholics, leads them to dispute the claim by Verba et al. (1995) that Latino Catholicism contributes to low turnout.

The net result of these findings is that religious institutions are not linking Hispanics to electoral activities. Nonetheless, those churches that do provide their members with opportunities to develop civic skills may be providing the same socialization services that the military did historically. Even if that is so, however, such opportunities are probably available only to a small percentage of the population. Consequently, churches are unlikely to play a major role in linking Latinos and the state so that they may both be better served.

A growing corpus of research indicates that a more direct way of increasing Hispanic turnout is in GOTV campaigns. Wrinkle et al. (1996), Shaw et al. (2000), and de la Garza et al. (2002b) find that mobilization is a major predictor of turnout even after controlling for SES. Michelson (2002a) also finds, like Shaw et al., that using a Latino messenger significantly increases turnout in outreach campaigns, but de la Garza et al. (2002a) suggest more complicated patterns.

In an experimental study implemented in Los Angeles during the 2000 election by a well-established Latino nonpartisan organization, Ramirez (2002) found large differences associated with telephone canvassing. He warns, however, that there is no evidence that Latinos would respond as positively to outreach by non-Hispanic institutions, including political parties—an argument echoed by Park & Vargas-Ramos (2002). Nonetheless, Ramirez's findings suggest that canvassing via telephone is as effective as contacting potential voters in person. If this is

correct, GOTV campaigns that target Latinos will be much more easily implemented than Shaw et al. (2000) and Michelson (2002a) suggest.

The significance of these findings is enhanced by the fact that the major political parties do so little to engage Latinos. In New York, Jones-Correa (1998) argues, the parties make it difficult for Latinos (and immigrants in particular) to access the electoral system. A similar pattern seems to characterize how political parties deal with Latinos nationally. Leighley (2002) reports that 45% of Anglos, compared to 15% of Latinos, are asked to engage in campaign activity, and whereas ~18% of Anglos and blacks engage in campaign work, only 8% of Hispanics do. Efforts to involve Hispanics in campaign activities, from working on the campaign to contributing money, reach only 17% of them, compared to 47% of Anglos. An ongoing series of studies analyzes the role of Latinos in the eight states with the largest Hispanic populations in presidential elections from 1988 through 1996 (de la Garza & DeSipio 1992, 1996, 1999). These studies show that both parties essentially ignored Latinos, both in small states such as Arizona (Avalos 1999) and New Mexico (García 1996) and in key states including Texas (Montoya 1999, Martínez 1996), New York (Falcon 1999), Florida (Moreno & Warren 1999), and Illinois (Fraga 1992). With the exception of Democratic efforts in California in 1996, during these years neither party systematically implemented GOTV campaigns targeting Latinos. It was especially notable that the Republicans did not implement such efforts in 2000, given their commitment to winning Latino votes.

TRPI polls that have tracked the effects of outreach since 1996 suggest caution in accepting the positive outcomes associated with GOTV campaigns. Although there is no doubt that those individuals contacted are more likely to vote, it is also clear that those contacted have higher incomes and education levels than those not contacted (de la Garza et al. 2002b). In other words, mobilization to date has not targeted the great numbers of Hispanics who are least likely to vote. How effective such efforts will be with this segment of the Hispanic electorate is unknown.

The question, then, of why individual Latinos do not vote at the same rates as comparably situated Anglos remains unanswered. Perhaps the answer is that Latinos are simply less and differently socialized regarding the electoral process. Even when they are native born, psychologically integrated, and patriotic Americans, most have less contact with major electoral institutions and government per se.

Additionally, Hispanics in majority-minority districts need not vote at high rates to have a coethnic elected, so they may come to see their vote as irrelevant even if they think it is important to have coethnics in office. To the extent that they live in overlapping majority-minority districts, as most probably do, this problem is exacerbated. Latinos in districts that are less concentrated, such as those in California, are more likely to be recruited into the electoral process, either to form coalitions to vote for Latino-friendly candidates or to insure that Latinos are elected. Furthermore, low-concentration districts are much more prevalent in California than in any other state with a large Latino population. Thus, the difference in the composition of these ethnic districts is surely a major reason that Hispanic turnout

in Texas is always lower than it is in California. Moreover, the political history of Latinos and their current experiences with American society are not sufficiently negative to mobilize them into the electoral process. Thus, overall, it seems that the most effective way to increase turnout is via old-fashioned political machine-like organizing. Political machines, it should be noted, also function as political socializers, so using such an approach to increase voting will not only serve the short term interests of Latinos but could in the long term prepare them to become autonomous political actors.

A key focus for future research, given these findings, should be comparative analyses of Hispanic voting in minority-minority and influence (25%–40% Hispanic) districts within and across states.

PARTISANSHIP

A related question concerns Hispanic partisanship and its effects on Latino electoral behavior. Long before President Bush reached out to Latinos, journalists, key Republican partisans, and Latino advocates trying to manipulate both parties to their advantage have claimed that the Latino vote is up for grabs (de la Garza 1996). All reliable evidence indicates, however, that except for Cubans, the majority of Latinos have identified and continue to identify as Democrats. Alvarez & Bedolla (2001) report that the patterns described in *Latino Voices* from 1990 remained essentially unchanged in 2000: Overall, 57% of Latinos identified as Democrats; less than half that percentage identified as Republicans. Major national polls produced similar findings (Uhlanger & García 2002). Mexican American partisan affiliation has been especially stable, while Cubans have become slightly more Republican and Puerto Ricans have become slightly less Democratic. Central Americans, who were not included in the LNPS, are strongly Democratic (Alvarez & Bedolla 2001). Thus, changes in overall patterns, slight though they may be, seem to reflect the increased presence of immigrants in the electorate. Whereas 60% of native-born Hispanics identify as Democrats, only 52% of the foreign-born do. These patterns challenge recent claims of a rise in Republicanism among Latinos (Pew Hispanic Center 2002).

Immigrants also identify as Democrats. Cain et al. (1991) find that the longer Latinos were in the United States, the more likely they were to be Democrats. Additionally, Barreto & Woods (2003) find that Latino Democrat registered voters outnumbered Republicans 3.4:1 in 1992, and this increased to 3.88:1 in 1998. Because many if not most of the new registrants were naturalized citizens, this increase suggests that the pattern described by Cain et al. continues.

Latino partisanship is also distinctive in other ways. It primarily reflects social and political rather than economic factors (Alvarez & Bedolla 2001, Uhlanger & García 2002). Barreto & Woods (2003) illustrate this by showing that the issue positions of the major parties explain Hispanic partisan preferences in Southern California. Alvarez & Bedolla (2001) also conclude, after analyzing Hispanic

preferences on a national level regarding key issues such as abortion, illegal immigration, affirmative action, government-sponsored health insurance, and gun control, that policy preferences rather than SES explain Latino partisanship. Furthermore, they argue that current patterns are likely to persist unless the parties substantially change their positions on these issues, which is unlikely. They also warn that ideological changes regarding the appropriate role of government in providing social services could significantly affect Hispanic partisanship patterns. Now that the Republicans are heavily engaged in convincing the electorate of the need for such a change, scholars would be well advised to monitor the extent to which those efforts are penetrating Latino communities.

Alvarez & Bedolla (2001) suggest that national origin, which usually implies a cultural characteristic, has an independent effect on Latino party identification. Their statement ignores the structural factors that have shaped Hispanic partisanship. For example, Republican anticommunism motivated Cubans to shift from the Democratic to the Republican Party; New Mexican Latinos moved from the Republicans to the Democrats as the latter became increasingly supportive of working-class issues; and Mexican Americans in the rest of the Southwest became Democrats because until very recently Republicans had no significant presence, and once they established one, they became associated with antiminority and anti-working class policies. Thus, attributing independent status to national origin easily leads to making ethnicity an unchanging attribute rather than a fluid characteristic, and conceals or distorts historical and ongoing relations between Hispanics and American political institutions.

In view of the centrality of issues to Latino partisanship, it is reasonable to ask how informed Latino voters are about the policy positions of competing candidates and how that affects their voting. Nicholson et al. (2002) show that Latino voters are reasonably well informed about policy issues and the candidates' position on them. Overall, about 51% of Bush voters and 70% of Gore voters held views on issues such as abortion, gun control, and school vouchers that were consistent with those of their preferred candidate. As expected, the most common error was to attribute to one's preferred candidate one's issue preference. Voters who preferred Bush were less knowledgeable about his policy positions, whereas Gore's likeability index was unrelated to knowledge of his positions. Overall, the likeability rating of each candidate had an even greater net effect than partisanship as a predictor of candidate preference.

Bush, thus, seems to have enjoyed some success with his use of Spanish and consistent proclamations about the importance of the Hispanic vote. Nicholson et al. (2002) persuasively conclude, however, that such symbolism was ultimately of limited value, as evidenced by the fact that the great majority of non-Cuban Hispanics remained loyal to the Democrats.

Political participation is more than voting, however. The final sections of this review address the topics of gender, immigrant incorporation, transnationalism, and policy attitudes and influence, with particular attention to Hispanic political loyalties.

GENDER

Qualitative research has contributed significantly to our understanding of Latina political behavior. Hardy-Fanta (1993) shows that understanding Hispanic political involvement requires going beyond the study of conventional political activities, such as lobbying and voting, to include a wide range of interpersonal interactions that have significant political consequences. This may be why, as Marquez (2001) argues, Latina organizations not only have created a new political space for themselves, but their agenda often conflicts with that of white-feminist and male-dominated Mexican American groups. As the case studies of *Barrio Ballots* (de la Garza et al. 1993) show, Hispanic women have also been involved in all aspects of election campaigns.

The empirical study of Latina electoral involvement has developed in parallel with the study of Hispanic participation per se. Just as there was little research on Latino voting in the 1970s and 1980s, what there was ignored how gender affects attitudes and turnout (Welch & Sigelman 1992). Current research indicates that if there is a gender gap, it follows the pattern that characterizes the general population. For example, Latinas are more Democratic than Latinos but only slightly more liberal. Overall, Welch & Sigelman conclude that nothing would be lost if race and ethnicity were ignored in determining the effects of gender on self-described ideology, partisanship, and vote choice, a view Montoya (1996) essentially shares.

Moreover, Anglo women share with Latinas a characteristic that has been the focus of much of this paper. Women vote less than men, and although Hispanic female immigrants vote at higher rates than their male counterparts (Bass & Casper 2001), overall Hispanic women are less likely to vote than white women. To increase the size of the Hispanic electorate, therefore, special efforts must be made to incorporate Latinas. Additionally, there is clearly a need for research that compares Latinas to African American and Anglo women to determine why Latinas vote even less than Latinos, and what factors explain the differences between Latinas and African American and Anglo women.

Similarities among Latinas notwithstanding, there are noteworthy gender-based patterns among Hispanics. Mexican-origin men and women more closely resemble each other in attitudes and behavior than do their Puerto Rican and Cuban counterparts (Montoya et al. 2000). Puerto Rican women are significantly more likely to identify as Democrats than are Puerto Rican men (Uhlaher & García 2002). Also, the factors that influence turnout among women differ from those that predict the male vote. The most consistent predictors of voting for Hispanic women are interest in politics, church attendance, and organizational and school involvement; age, education, and partisanship are noticeably absent. Montoya et al. (2000) conclude that political socialization and institutions influence Latinas more significantly than Latinos.

They also argue that what may be most fundamental to Latinas is that, unlike men, they do not have the financial resources, work skills, and time to be involved in politics. More Cuban women have such resources, and they also have significantly

higher participatory rates. In other words, the Cuban example indicates that it is the lack of resources rather than cultural traditions that explains why Latinas have lower participatory rates than Latinos.

There are also gender differences associated with some of the policy preferences of distinct Hispanic groups. How gender affects attitude toward legal immigration is unclear. Hardy-Fanta (2000) reports Latinas are more supportive of increased immigration than Latinos, but Binder et al. (1997) find no gender effects. Also unexpected is the finding of virtually no differences between Latinos and Latinas regarding increased welfare spending (Montoya et al. 2000).

With regard to women's roles, the LNPS found Cubans held the most conservative views and Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans were the most modern. Surprisingly, however, Hispanic men voice stronger support for abortion than Hispanic women. In 1966, the difference between Hispanic men and women was 15%, whereas among Anglos and blacks the gap was very small. Relatedly, a study on why urban school boards enact sex-related education and health programs shows strong support for such programs among Hispanics (Hess & Leal 1999). This challenges claims that high rates of membership in the Catholic Church and other Christian religions and a strong commitment to the nuclear family would prevent Hispanics from supporting school-based sex education.

IMMIGRANT INCORPORATION

The most significant factor in the growth of Hispanic political influence is the influx of immigrants. Moreover, global immigration is changing the face of America and has great implications for the nation's future politics. It is therefore disappointing that, unlike sociology and economics, political science has not engaged immigration to understand the multiple ways immigrants may affect the nation.

A fundamental characteristic of Hispanic immigrants is their slow pace of naturalization. There appears to be a tendency to explain this in uniquely Latin American terms. For example, Jones-Correa (1998) concludes that a major reason for delayed Hispanic naturalization is that immigrants are cross pressured between the feeling that naturalizing betrays their homeland and the desire to join political communities in the United States. This claim is limited because it is based on a study of 112 Latinos in Queens, New York, and it needs additional testing because Canadians and Mexicans are the two groups with the longest wait between immigration and naturalization. Asian immigrants on average wait 7 years, Europeans 10, and Latin American and Caribbean immigrants between 12 and 14 (DeSipio 2001). This pattern suggests that proximity of homeland, a factor unmentioned by Jones-Correa (1998), plays a major role in the timing of naturalization. Additionally, DeSipio (2001) finds that individual differences such as education and income are more significant than nationality differences in explaining immigrant naturalization, even though national origins continue to have predictive value. Another factor that should be considered is that the second generation have long had

a pattern of distancing themselves from immigrants rather than linking them to the polity (Browning & de la Garza 1986, Mollenkopf et al. 2001). To the extent that different nationalities adhere to this pattern, they could reduce the pace at which conationals naturalize. Finally, it must be emphasized that, except for voting and specialized employment, there are few benefits to be gained from naturalizing.

Most immigrants do not naturalize or do so only after long residence in the United States. In 1990, according to the Census Bureau, only 8 of 19.8 million immigrants had naturalized. As of 1988, one third of Hispanic immigrants had naturalized, one third had initiated the naturalization process (sometimes never to be finished), and one third were not interested in becoming citizens (Pachon & DeSipio 1994). In 2000 (Mollenkopf et al. 2001), only about one third of immigrants had naturalized, and Latinos had the lowest rates of all: 25% had naturalized compared with 40% of Asians, 33% of Africans and black Caribbeans, and 50% of whites.

The National Latino Immigrant Survey (Pachon & DeSipio 1994), the most detailed source on Latino naturalization and political incorporation, offers numerous insights into immigrant motives regarding naturalization. The naturalization rate for all immigrants is higher than the rates for Latinos as a whole, but rates differ among Hispanic nationalities. The rates for Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans eligible to naturalize all exceed 80%, with Cubans the leaders at 88%. The Mexican naturalization rate is the lowest at 69%.

Respondents reported that civic and participatory reasons were their primary reasons for naturalizing (Pachon & DeSipio 1994). However, although 86% of immigrants surveyed indicated that the right to vote was very important to their decision to naturalize, among the recently naturalized, neither this nor any other reason that spurred naturalization influenced the likelihood of voting. DeSipio (1996a) also notes that their self-reported turnout rates varied between 40% and 60%.

Naturalization rates may have temporarily increased in the mid-1990s because of a variety of factors. Fear of Governor Pete Wilson and Proposition 187 uniquely affected California's Mexican immigrant population and spurred citizenship applications. At the national level, the large number of Mexicans who came in under the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1986 were required to renew their immigration status, and other Latino immigrants also had to renew their "green cards" to maintain their status as legal immigrants. For both of these groups, it was just as easy and no more costly to naturalize as to renew their status as legal resident aliens. Thus, many chose to naturalize, and this may have resulted in a temporary spike in naturalization rates. Additionally, Latino political leaders finally recognized that getting immigrants naturalized and to the polls was the key to greater political influence, and for the first time (Pachon 1998), they mobilized in support of naturalization campaigns.

Patterns of immigrant civic engagement in activities for which citizenship is unnecessary are mixed. The LNPS shows that naturalized and native-born citizens have comparable rates of organizational involvement. However, a subsequent

qualitative study of four communities in California and New Mexico found that the foreign-born had lower levels of civic and political engagement than the native-born (Segura et al. 1999). Nonetheless, regardless of how much lower their rates of participation are in civic or political activities, naturalized Mexican parents are as active in schools as are Anglo parents (DeSipio 1996a).

With regard to electoral engagement, there is a strong correlation between time spent in the United States and the likelihood of registering and voting (Bass & Casper 2001). That time in the United States has a greater effect on registration than on voting suggests that GOTV efforts should be more successful than they apparently are. Curiously, whereas being married has a positive effect on registering and voting among the native-born, it has a negative effect among naturalized citizens (Bass & Casper 2001).

There is broad agreement that naturalized Hispanics vote at lower rates than the native-born. This is predictable given that they have the demographics associated with low turnout, they reside in communities candidates tend to ignore, and they are not well socialized in American electoral politics. Although this pattern characterizes Latinos nationally (Bass & Casper 1999), there are differences associated with nationality and location. Naturalization seems to stimulate voting among Cubans, who have voted at higher rates than Anglos, but it has no effect on Mexican Americans (DeSipio 1996b). Indeed, Mexicans had the lowest of self-reported turnout rates at 43%, whereas Salvadorans reached 47% and Cubans, Dominicans, and Guatemalans exceeded 60% (Bass & Casper 2001). In New York City, turnout in 1996 declined by $\sim 1\%$ for each 10% increase in the immigrant population, and in Los Angeles the decrease doubled (Mollenkopf et al. 2001). Mexican naturalized citizens are one third as likely to vote as are Dominicans. In New York City, which has programs for immigrants and naturalization as well as unwelcoming politicians, the naturalized are more likely to vote than the native-born, but in Los Angeles they are less likely to do so (Mollenkopf et al. 2001).

In California as a whole, Latino immigrants vote at lower rates than the native-born. But among Mexicans, the turnout gap is 17%, whereas other Latino immigrants are $\sim 12\%$ more likely to vote than white immigrants are. Nonetheless, Hispanic immigrants who have lived in California since 1970 vote on average 17% more than the native-born, but those who arrived after 1980 vote 15% less than the native-born (Citrin & Highton 2002). Contradicting this pattern is the finding that Hispanics who naturalized in California between 1992 and 1996 were $\sim 23\%$ more likely to vote than all other Latinos, including the native-born (DeSipio & Pachon 2002).

DeSipio (1996b) reports that national origin is not a significant factor distinguishing voters from nonvoters. Equally noteworthy, in keeping with the research on mobilization reviewed above, is that state of residence is the most regularly significant variable affecting immigrant turnout. There is disagreement regarding the effect of marital status, gender, employment status, home ownership, and metropolitan residence on the immigrant's propensity to vote (Bass & Casper 2001, DeSipio & Pachon 2002).

The consensus that Hispanic naturalized citizens vote less than the native-born is consistent with the hypothesis that immigrant Latinos are not well socialized into the polity, that they reside in heavily ethnic neighborhoods where GOTV campaigns are the exception, and that their demographics predict low turnout. Thus, although immigrants will not increase Latino turnout to rates comparable with those of Anglos, neither will they drag them down. More significantly, Hispanic political clout rides the crest of the immigrant wave. Immigrants are the core around which new Latino districts have been constructed at every level of elected office. They know it and the officials know it, and that shared knowledge is the basis of their growing influence. This is why, whether they vote or not, the immigrants now have access to elected and appointed Latino and non-Latino officials. DeSipio's (2001) argument that low voting rates will diminish the immigrant's influence relative to the native-born therefore seems to understate the overall role that immigrants play in Hispanic politics.

Nonetheless, it is important to determine the key factors that influence turnout among immigrants. If, as has been suggested, these are the same factors that influence the native-born, then the same tactics could be used to increase turnout. If other variables are at work, or if some are more significant among the naturalized than among the native-born, such as socialization or psychological perspectives, then specific tactics that target the naturalized must be pursued. It will also be necessary to go beyond conventional survey research and incorporate institutional variables, such as local- and state-level institutions and indicators of ethnic residential concentration, to develop a full picture of the dynamics of immigrant incorporation.

TRANSNATIONALISM

A new issue that is closely related to immigrant incorporation is transnationalism. Like immigrant incorporation, it is essentially ignored by political science despite its significant political implications. The increasing availability of airline travel, cell phones, and international banking services has enabled continuous interactions between Latin American immigrants and their countries of origin. It is argued that such interactions have brought about a new relationship between immigrants and their countries of origin. From a disciplinary perspective, transnationalism refers to the impact of this alleged new relationship on immigrants' political incorporation.

The relationship is extremely complex and fluid. It is unclear, for example, whether the emigrants or home-country political actors are primarily responsible for transitional initiatives such as absentee voting. In Colombia's case, Jones-Correa (1998) asserts the emigrants initiated these demands. My research with Colombian political leaders and scholars found widespread agreement that including such rights in the 1991 Constitution was one of several signals given by the drug traffickers (through the congressmen they controlled) to Colombian "mules" in U.S. prisons to assure them that their interests in Colombia were well

taken care of (de la Garza et al. 2000). In Mexico, a case Jones-Correa mentions but does not analyze, opposition party leaders since 1988 have worked so closely with the emigrants that it is impossible to determine the source of the demand for absentee voting. It is reasonable to assume that similar complexities color other aspects of state-emigrant relations in most cases.

Whereas most of the literature on transnationalism focuses on familial or cultural contact with sending communities, or on economic linkages including remittances for family maintenance or investment, DeSipio et al. (2003) describe the extent to which emigrants engage in explicitly political transnational activities. A major consequence of their work is that it refutes the notion implicit in much of the literature that transnationals are sojourners who do not develop strong ties to the United States. Furthermore, it is the first approach that tests the frequency of transnational politics among emigrants and the persistence of transnational political activity over time. The authors operationalize political transnationalism in terms of efforts by emigrants to maintain or reestablish political involvement in the communities of origin through contributions to political campaigns, voting, lobbying for the vote in countries where it is not yet granted, and even running for office in the home country while residing in the United States. The study, based on a national survey of Dominicans, Mexicans, Salvadorans, and island-born Puerto Ricans, documents how limited political transnationalism is. Dominicans were the most likely to have attended a meeting dealing with home-country politics or to have belonged to a group consisting of members of their communities of origin, but only 1 in 5 had participated in such activities. Indeed, the only behavior that engages a majority of Hispanic immigrants in what might be a transnational political activity is following the news from home.

Respondents were much more likely to be involved in organizations that focus on U.S. activities than in those that emphasize transnational ties. Case studies of Mexican immigrant organizations in Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, and New York show that even groups composed entirely of members from one sending community are much more likely to provide services to help members integrate into America, such as English classes, than to offer programs aimed at maintaining ties to the home country (de la Garza & Hazan 2003).

It is also important to note that key transnational behaviors, such as remitting, decrease over time (DeSipio 2001) and that as immigrants and their children become more incorporated into American society their attitudes toward immigrants and immigration become more negative (de la Garza & DeSipio 1998, Newton 2000).

DeSipio et al. (2003) also show that those immigrants engaged in transnational organizations and political activities are more likely to be involved in American elections, and that those who were engaged in electoral activities in their homelands were more likely than those who had not been to be involved with elections here. One possible explanation for this pattern is that it reflects a tradition of political activism shared by a small group of immigrants. Alternatively, it could reflect a new kind of politics that flows from transnational interactions. There is no evidence

that this is the case, but if it is, transnational politics may have significant long-term implications for inter-American relations and American politics generally. Thus, the question merits further investigation.

Huntington (1996, 1997, 2000) has repeatedly warned that even without political ties to the homeland, Latino immigrants threaten the nation's political fabric. Given his prominence in the discipline, it is essential to respond to his views because of how they may influence the discipline (see Smith 2000) and policy makers. He begins with a futuristic hypothetical scenario in which Hispanics use their new political clout to impede American efforts to defend the national interest in a new war over energy reserves because of their lack of commitment to the "national interest" (Huntington 1996). He then explicitly criticizes the Council on Foreign Relations for its efforts to incorporate Latinos into foreign policy circles as part of its effort to broaden the foreign policy community, because of their continuing political commitments to their home countries (Huntington 1997). His views culminate with the conclusion that Mexican immigration threatens the United States' cultural integrity, national identity, and perhaps its very future as a country (Huntington 2000). He argues that (a) Mexican intermarriage has decreased; (b) a Mexican American cultural community with no need to speak English could develop, as he alleges has happened with Cubans in Miami; and that, without Mexican immigration, (c) illegal immigration would be relatively minor, (d) education levels would be very high, and (e) bilingual education would diminish.

Some of these arguments are contradicted by scholarly research, and others are little more than contentious allegations. The first and second are demonstrably false (de la Garza et al. 1992, Bean & Stevens 2003). The third is theoretically indefensible. Eliminating Mexican undocumented migration would, of course, reduce Mexican illegality, but immigration theory indicates it would have no effect on illegal immigration from elsewhere in Latin America and other parts of the world except perhaps to increase it because the structural forces that shape immigration would remain in place (Bean & Stevens 2003). The fourth is contentious. Eliminating Mexican immigration would raise national educational levels. However, the educational levels of Mexican immigrants advance rapidly from the first to the second generation; the lack of significant improvement in educational levels in the third and fourth generations is not because of cultural factors but because of the lack of public and private resources (Bean et al. 2001). Finally, although most Mexican Americans support bilingual education, they see it as a means of learning English (de la Garza et al. 1992) rather than as a means of retaining Spanish. Moreover, Greene (1998), a Manhattan Institute Fellow, has found that the net educational effect of bilingual education is small but positive.

Further evidence that undermines the transnational claims and the allegations regarding the threat Mexican immigrants (and their native-born children) pose to the nation is these immigrants' support for core American values, such as essential elements of democracy and economic self-sufficiency. Based on an analysis of Mexican American patriotism and support for political tolerance and economic individualism, de la Garza et al. (1996) conclude that, regardless of whether they speak English, are foreign- or native-born, or have an intense ethnic consciousness,

Mexican Americans support American core values as least as much as Anglos do. Dowley & Silver (2000) also find no statistical differences between Anglo and Latino patriotism and agree that ethnic attachments do not lead to alienation from the larger community.

De la Garza et al. (1997) test two models—one based on Hispanic cultural attachments and the other based on the assumption that American socialization structures how Latinos view Latin America and U.S. foreign policy in the region—to determine which better explains Hispanic attitudes toward U.S. policy in Latin America. They found that (a) Hispanics gave the United States the highest thermometer scores³ of the ten countries included in the study; (b) not only are Latinos not uniformly positive about Latin America, they differ among themselves in their affect toward specific Latin American countries; (c) no nationality group ranks more than one of the five Latin American countries in the study positively on a thermometer scale; (d) English monolinguals and bilinguals express lower affect than do Spanish monolinguals for Latin American countries; and (e) the respondents do not see Latin American countries as constituting a distinct, unified dimension. The ways in which they group them with other countries from across the globe indicate that Latinos view Latin American countries in ideological or policy-specific terms rather than in cultural terms. Overall, the analysis strongly rejects the cultural model and supports the structural model.

Nonetheless, the foreign policy views of Latino elites differ somewhat from those of Anglo elites (Pachon et al. 2000). According to a 1998 survey, they consider the environment and world hunger much more significant than maintaining military power and defending allies' security. With regard to Latin America, however, their goals are the same as those of the U.S. government, i.e., to strengthen democracy in the region and promote international trade and investment. If Latinos were to lobby on behalf of these goals, they would be emulating ““other Americans’ in pursuit of legitimate goals within the United States and in advocating that the government of the United States act on its principles and in pursuit of its objectives” (Dominguez 2000, p. 157).

Their involvement in and attitudes toward foreign policy, regarding Latin America and in general, are distinctive in other ways, however. Most significant is their lack of engagement in foreign policy. Hakim & Rosales (2000) report that, except for the Cuban American National Foundation, neither the national Latino organizations [such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) and National Council de la Raza] nor the Congressional Hispanic Caucus focuses on international issues. Thus, Hispanics exert almost no systematic influence on U.S.–Latin American relations or foreign policy in general. Furthermore, in their analysis of case studies of emigrant–home country relations involving Dominicans, Guatemalans, Colombians, Salvadorans, and Mexicans, de la Garza et al. (2000) found no evidence of emigrants lobbying in the United

³A thermometer scale ranks a respondent's feelings about a person or issue by giving their feelings a score of 0–100. The higher the score, the “hotter” the respondent feels about the person/issue.

States on behalf of the home country. The only possible exception to this is their involvement in proimmigration issues, which, though benefiting the home-country government, is more clearly self-interested behavior. For this reason, Dominguez (2000, p. 157) concludes that if Huntington is correct about ethnics undermining the national interest through their involvement in foreign policy, "U.S. Latinos are not at the root of the problem."

Furthermore, the foreign policy views of significant proportions of Hispanic elites run counter to Latin American preferences. For example, more than half of the Hispanic elites interviewed would support unilateral political and economic policies toward Mexico in order to deal with a hypothetical problem caused by drug trafficking or to prevent massive immigration resulting from political turmoil, and more than 40% support unilateral responses to human rights violations anywhere in the hemisphere (Pachon et al. 2000). Such unilateral responses are especially repugnant to Latin American governments. Contrary to established U.S. preferences and more in keeping with Latin American preferences, they favor increasing the attention the United States pays to Latin America and decreasing our European emphasis, and they do not support further increases in military spending.

Additionally, fundamental differences between Latinos and Anglos may be developing. Davis & Silver (2003) report that 56% of Latinos compared with 49% of Anglos agreed that the United States was responsible for the hatred that led to 9/11. On the other hand, in a 2002 TRPI survey, more than 75% of Latin American immigrants indicated there was no justification for the 9/11 attacks. More noteworthy are findings that indicate that Latinos are less likely than Anglos to state they are willing to fight for the United States (Dowley & Silver 2000). This suggests they are becoming less patriotic than Anglos, contrary to the earlier findings of de la Garza et al. (1996). Future research should test the hypothesis that this new pattern reflects immigrants' resentment of the effects of American policies on their homelands and of anti-immigrant policies such as California's Proposition 187.

A tangentially related issue is the status of Puerto Rico. Barreto (2002) persuasively argues that what is at stake in the status debate is demands for increased autonomy but not political independence. Thus, even though Puerto Ricans intensely and successfully protested the continued use of Vieques for bombing practice and remain intensely divided between favoring statehood and commonwealth status, islanders appear to remain strongly pro-American and manifest no signs of decreasing commitment to the nation.

POLICY CONCERNS

Although their policy priorities closely resemble those of Anglos (Uhlanger & García 2002), it is reasonable to expect Latinos to have distinctive views on issues that, given their history and current status, particularly affect them. These include immigration, affirmative action, and relations with the courts and police.

Regardless of national origin, Latinos rank immigration among their lowest priorities (de la Garza et al. 1992, Pachon et al. 2000), and although most Latinos agree with the majority of Anglos that there are “too many immigrants” coming to America (de la Garza 1992), the most acculturated are the most likely to favor reduced immigration (Hood et al. 1997). Further evidence of the limited affect of cultural ties on attitudes toward immigration is that the Hispanics who supported Proposition 187 were Spanish-dominant noncitizens who would be targets of discrimination if the proposition passed (DeSipio & Pachon 2002).

Hispanic attitudes toward affirmative action are similarly varied. Overall, the majority of Latinos support it, but Cubans’ views closely resemble those of Anglos. Nonetheless, slight majorities of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, compared with 73% of Cubans and 91% of Anglos, favor using merit rather than affirmative action to allocate benefits. Also, 73% of Latinos support selecting students for college without consideration of their racial or ethnic background (Uhlanger & García 2002). Still, more than 75% of California’s Hispanic voters opposed that state’s anti-affirmative action referendum. On the other hand, even though the majority of California’s Latinos believe that affirmative action is still needed to assist Hispanics, blacks, and women, 51% of Hispanics and 56% of Anglos agreed that ethnics use special programs to get benefits they do not deserve (Cain et al. 2000). Clearly, although Latinos support affirmative action, their views are complicated and nuanced.

According to a national survey by the National Center for State Courts, Hispanic attitudes toward police and the courts are also unexpectedly supportive (de la Garza & DeSipio 2001). Twice as many have positive views of police as have negative views (48% versus 24%), and they are as likely as non-Latinos to have positive views of the court. Although 34% reported they had been discriminated against by police, 43% said they had not. The foreign-born were slightly more likely to be positive about police even though they were also more likely to report discrimination by police. Although those who have negative views of the courts and report police discrimination constitute a significant segment of the Latino population, they are fewer than might have been expected given the negative history of Latino-police relations. This relatively positive perspective is another indicator of why Hispanic voting is not more responsive to ethnic cues or relational goods incentives.

POLICY INFLUENCE

Prior to 1990, ethnic gerrymandering and a variety of institutional rules, such as the lack of term limits, were major impediments to Latino office holding. Thanks to continued demographic growth throughout the 1990s and contentious redistricting implemented because of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) during that decade, increasing numbers of Latinos across the country now serve in every level of elective office except the U.S. Senate, presidency, and vice presidency. Because the

changes that followed the 1990 redistricting were so far-reaching, Guerra (1998) argues that although the formal rules hurt Latinos prior to 1990, since then Latinos have benefited from them. Although Guerra's analysis focuses on California, it probably applies to all states that have undergone similar institutional changes. As the success of English-only referenda illustrates, however, this increased influence is effective when policies are managed within constrained environments but is of no consequence when policies are handled through nonlegislative channels (Santoro 1999).

This reinforces the argument by Hero & Tolbert (1995) regarding indirect substantive representation in Congress. Kerr & Miller (1997), contrary to Hero & Tolbert, find that Hispanic congressmen directly represent Latino interests and that the increase in Hispanic legislators at all levels is likely to lead to even more direct interest representation, just as demographic growth should lead to greater indirect representation. The extent and consequences of such increases merit scholarly attention.

Enhancing the likelihood of direct and indirect interest representation is the establishment of a permanent Hispanic presence in Washington. The first phase of this process was effected during the Carter administration, when the number of Hispanic political appointments was so high that these appointees developed a network that most used to advance Latino interests (de la Garza 1984). The second phase was the institutionalization of an Hispanic lobby involving the major Hispanic organizations, which first flexed its muscle during the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 debates (Sierra 1999). The third and final phase is the increase in Hispanic congressmen and the institutionalization of the Hispanic Congressional Caucus. Given that almost all the congressmen are Democrats and that the organizations that make up the Hispanic lobby are officially nonpartisan but actually support a Democratic agenda, how effectively can they represent Hispanics when Republicans control the White House and Congress? How well do these congressmen represent their constituents given low voter turnout rates in their districts? What does it mean for the Hispanic community that the organizations that lobby on behalf of Latinos are sustained by corporate and foundation grants rather than by dues-paying members? These are some of the questions that analysts should address in order to determine how effectively Latinos are represented at the national level.

At the local level, research on educational policy, a priority issue for Hispanics (Uhlanger & García 2002), indicates that Latinos enjoy the benefits of effective direct representation (Fraga et al. 1986). Hispanic students in districts that use ward or mixed election systems, which result in Latinos being elected to school boards, are better off than students in districts that use at-large elections. This is because the presence of Hispanic school board members is associated with an increased number of Latino teachers; this in turn is associated with numerous positive outcomes, such as increases in programs for gifted students, increases in graduation rates, and decreases in corporal punishment (which leads to lower graduation rates) (Meier & Stewart 1991).

CONCLUSION

The past decade has seen significant developments that affect the study of Latino politics. The initial task was to make it possible to analyze the Latino political world. This has been accomplished, thanks to case studies, political ethnographies, and surveys that to a significant degree targeted Latinos to the exclusion of other groups. The best example of this approach is the LNPS. Now, however, it is clear that an Hispanic-specific emphasis should be abandoned in favor of a broader, comparative approach that will explicate the similarities and differences between Hispanics, Anglos, and other groups.

The first step in implementing this approach will be to modernize NES so that it includes a representative sample of the nation's new demography and questions that address the new issues that affect the political life of these new populations. This means more than having Latinos statistically represented; it means restructuring NES sampling procedures so that it is regularly possible to understand Latino perspectives and their impact on national political life. This is not an outlandish proposition given that the Hispanic vote could determine the outcome of a presidential election.

The alternative approach is to replicate the LNPS and other surveys, such as that of the San Jose Mercury News, but this will keep Hispanics out of the discipline's mainstream. Such an effort will, of course, produce significant new data, but, like the LNPS, its value will diminish over time, and this will lead to demands for LNPS III. The only way to avoid this is to move Latinos to the center of the discipline, which can only be done through NES.

Additionally, because structural factors, such as parties and state and local institutions, have been shown to be more analytically relevant than national origin, researchers should be less concerned that their studies include representative samples of all Hispanic nationalities and more focused on insuring that the relevant institutional variables are included. For example, there is no compelling theoretical reason to expect Salvadorans to differ from other immigrants because of their nationality. Instead, it is reasonable to hypothesize that immigrants from countries that experienced civil wars, such as Guatemala, Colombia, El Salvador, and Nicaragua may differ in politically significant ways from those who left more stable homelands, such as Ecuador, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic. Also, the political orientations immigrants developed before arriving in the United States should be analyzed to determine their impact on immigrant political behavior.

This review also convinces me that immigrant political incorporation requires more and deeper analysis. Immigrants claim that the desire to vote is a major factor stimulating their naturalization, but few vote after becoming citizens. Why? Relatedly, to what extent do Hispanic immigrants account for increasingly negative assessment of U.S. foreign policy and the disinclination among Hispanics, relative to Anglos, to serve in the American military?

In view of the consensus in the literature that Latino voting is essentially unaffected by the historical experiences of racism and exclusion, and few significant

barriers to political participation remain, what justifies the continued demands for VRA protections? This is an especially important question given that majority-minority districts appear to reduce voter turnout and that currently the primary beneficiaries of VRA protections are immigrants, most of whom never experienced the discrimination that gave rise to the VRA.

This review also leads me to ask how well Latino interests are served. Although Hispanic concerns are relatively well represented directly and indirectly in legislatures, the fact that low turnout essentially makes elected officials unaccountable to the Latino electorate is troubling. Also, because the national organizations are primarily accountable to corporations and foundations rather than to a Latino membership, I question how effectively Latino concerns are represented regarding immigration or other controversial issues on which overall Latino preferences are much more conservative than the policies pursued by organizations.

My readings also make it clear that qualitative research is essential to an understanding of the nuances and distinctiveness of Latino political experiences. Although this type of research should be encouraged, it would be more useful and widely accepted if it adhered to established methodological approaches such as APD. This would enable researchers to pursue their interest in the kinds of political behaviors that survey data usually miss while also dealing with issues of causality.

Perhaps what I found most surprising from this review is that ethnic factors are, in general, less significant than partisanship, issues, and class variables in explaining Hispanic voting. A possible exception to this is the role of coethnics in GOTV campaigns. To what extent, therefore, should GOTV campaigns emphasize nonethnic versus ethnic appeals? More important, is it possible to combine these nonethnic characters with ethnic indicators to develop a new conceptualization of the terms Latino/Hispanic that will help develop a more comprehensive approach to the study of Latinos?

Together, these conclusions lead me back to the theoretical question with which this essay began. Is pluralism the best model for analyzing Latino politics? Twenty years ago I would have said no. Today, based on my understanding of the material I have read, I respond with a qualified yes. This is not to say that anti-Hispanic racism no longer exists; instead, as a result of long and bitter struggles, Latinos are now part of the mainstream and have attained the clout to influence the system from within as well as from without. The major problem they will confront for the foreseeable future concerns immigrant incorporation. If the state does not provide immigrants access to the political mainstream, Latinos may find themselves in the kind of struggle they faced prior to the 1980s. Far from pluralistic, that situation would be best understood as a racially constructed unstable polity dominated by Anglo elites. Perhaps because I am heir to the optimism that characterizes Latinos, I do not think the nation will degenerate into those conditions.

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GLOBAL MEDIA AND POLITICS: Transnational Communication Regimes and Civic Cultures

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■ **Abstract** There is much debate about the effects of media market deregulation and the resulting growth of vast global media corporations. Some observers argue that deregulatory pressures have undermined public service broadcasting and media social-responsibility norms, resulting in deterioration of information quality and political disengagement of citizens in many nations. Others herald deregulatory trends as expanding information choices and enabling citizens to find their preferred levels of political engagement. This analysis proposes that we understand global trends in media deregulation as part of a transnational political regime in which many players and institutional arenas shape norms for media ownership, social responsibility, and citizen information. The players include multinational corporations, parties and public officials, interest associations, and citizen advocacy organizations. The institutional settings include national legislatures and regulatory commissions as well as international trade organizations, European Union commissions, and United Nations agencies. The outcomes of contests among these players at different institutional levels influence the degrees of normative consensus on ownership and content policies in the regime and explain how different nations engage with media deregulation and the market forces that increasingly shape the content of democratic public life.

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars argue that media globalization has dire effects on democracy and civic life. At the core, this global media process involves fierce competition and takeover wars waged by multinational corporate giants against local and national media companies. For their part, second-tier national and regional conglomerates also prey on weaker competitors, both to grow large enough to protect themselves from takeover by multinationals and to create the production and distribution synergies that size is thought to favor. This business logic is accompanied nearly everywhere by industry pressures to relax content and ownership regulations. The conglomerates also attack public service media subsidies, which they define as

subversive to free-market principles of open competition, profit, and consumer content choice.

Critics charge that the effects of this international trend include (a) reduced corporate social responsibility to serve diverse political, cultural, and demographic audiences; (b) increasingly generic programming in both entertainment and public affairs; (c) a reconstructed political media space that excludes much of local politics, citizen activism, public policy analysis, and deliberation; (d) emphasis on low cost, attention-getting sensationalism that promotes discouraging antisocial and antipolitical images; and (e) a public value shift associated with treating audiences purely as consumers, resulting in program content that is more compatible with advertising values and consumer lifestyles than with citizen engagement in public affairs (Bagdikian 1997, McChesney 1999, Price 1996, Schiller 1996). Some critics accuse the media oligarchs of imposing a cultural hegemony by standardizing content around consumer values and pursuing profit-maximizing business models that drive independent culture producers to the margins of the media marketplace (Bourdieu 1996, 2002). Herman & McChesney (1997) argue that as commercial values invade media systems, even passive media consumption tacitly legitimizes the politics and morality of a profit-driven social order.

Countering the view of rapacious corporate giants devouring civic cultures is the claim that media deregulation has greatly expanded the communication and information choices available to national audiences (Norris 2000). If those choices contain lighter political content, and audiences flock to them, the implication is that pent-up demand for simpler, more entertaining images of politics simply went unsatisfied in more heavily regulated, highbrow public service television systems (Gunther & Mughan 2000, p. 15). This consumer-democracy connection is amplified in arguments suggesting that citizens find sufficient meaning in personalized, dramatized infotainment to suit their political needs (Baum 2002, Schudson 1998, Zaller 2003). Indeed, a healthy scholarly debate has developed about the so-called tabloidization of news—a trend that has grown as television and press empires have expanded into deregulated national markets (Sparks & Tulloch 2000). Rather than dismiss tabloid news formats as inferior, some argue that they speak the language of populist conservatism that has become increasingly important in late-modern politics. They publicize images that appeal to economically marginal citizens who sense that they are living in a menacing world as potential victims of political and social predators (Knight 1989, p. 106). Taking tabloids seriously may help to explain a recent conversation that I had with an official inside the press operation of the German Social Democratic Party. Asked to name the most influential news organization in Germany, my source unhesitatingly replied, “*Bild Zeitung*,” which was described as “the national opinion maker.”

Beyond the debates about the relationship between media oligarchy and media democracy stands an even larger literature that links media exposure to civic malaise and citizen disengagement. Proponents of this school claim that media-induced citizen discontent with politics and government has grown over time in parallel with infotainment and more general deregulatory trends in commercial media.

Explanations range from the passivity induced by television in younger generations (Putnam 2000) to growing commercialism in news organizations and declining public service broadcasting values (Dahlgren 1995, Entman 1989). However, comparative data (Norris 2000, pp. 233–54) show generally positive associations between news and public affairs consumption and civic participation measures such as trust, regime support, and confidence. These continuing debates suggest the need to resolve questions about the impact of media market deregulation and varieties of citizen information formats on the quality of democratic civic life.

RESOLVING CONCEPTUAL DIFFERENCES

Current debates about global media trends and civic engagement may raise more questions than they answer. Sorting out these disagreements is difficult because of the lack of clear causal relationships, multiple and disjointed levels of analysis, and considerable national variation in media system types and civic engagement trends. For example, a question that bedevils causal inference is whether exposure to serious information channels actually promotes greater engagement, or whether already-engaged citizens simply find information sources to sustain their engagement (Norris 2000). Other individual-level studies point to the more complex possibility that older generations of engaged “dutiful” citizens continue to find conventional media sources that sustain their information needs, while younger generations operating with self-identity-centered models of citizenship may require more personalized and interactive multimedia experiences to engage them (Graber 2001). It is also difficult to sort out the “mixed message” effects of tabloid news because short-term spikes in public attention follow media spectacles, even as those same news formats feed longer-term cynicism about politics (Bennett & Entman 2001; Cappella & Jamieson 1997; Patterson 1993, 2000).

At another level of analysis, national differences in media ownership and program content patterns make it difficult to decide whether global media concentration is an independent power wedge that eventually breaks the resistance of nations, or whether some political cultures can block the impact of the global giants. A related dilemma is whether the most visible media trends (sensationalism, negative political advertising, infotainment, shrinking local political coverage) inevitably arrive in the Trojan Horse of media concentration, or whether those trends mainly reflect emerging consumer tastes within many nations, as individuals in globalizing societies become more concerned with personal lifestyles and less interested in civic responsibilities (Bennett 1998). This latter possibility seems consistent with broad cross-national declines (seemingly independent of media ownership concentration) in social trust, confidence in government, and other conventional indicators of political identification and participation (Inglehart 1997, Putnam 2000, Rahn & Rudolph 2001).

Given the prevalence of puzzling evidence and contradictory claims, it makes sense to seek a new theoretical framework—one that moves beyond conflating

ownership concentration, political content corruption, and citizen disaffection as inseparable elements of global media politics. At the same time, we need to keep different levels of analysis in the same theoretical context, both macro level (corporate practices, international trade organizations, and national party, interest, and regulatory politics) and micro level (political program content and individual responses). Because we are talking about a transnational phenomenon that has diverse manifestations at the national level, I propose that we adopt the notion of a transnational regime from international relations theory.

THE TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA REGIME: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

Transnational normative regimes involve multiple state and nonstate actors at different institutional levels negotiating norms that promote semivoluntary compliance over force in dealing with common issues. Transnational regimes have achieved varying degrees of success in coordinating such complex issues as trade, nuclear technology transfer, human rights, environmental protection, piracy on the high seas and in the radio waves, and harboring terrorists, among others. Applying this concept to global media politics, the core elements of a transnational media regime include (a) various state and nonstate players (e.g., media corporations, technology developers, national officials, consumer groups, and media reform movements) that (b) operate in different political arenas (e.g., international trade negotiations; European Union commissions; national licensing, regulatory, party finance, and legislative processes; and consumer and social movement campaigns) to (c) achieve normative agreement on standards and practices that define stakeholder relationships in media systems (covering such areas as ownership, production, trade, information flows, content quality, technology adoption, corporate responsibility, and consumer protection). Successive rounds of regime contests may disrupt or promote normative standards and establish patterned repertoires of conflict and cooperation among disparate state and nonstate actors (Katzenstein 1996, Sikkink 2003, Thomson 1990).

An advantage of a regime approach to global media politics is that it widens the analysis beyond the conventional focus on media corporations and national regulatory politics. This makes it easier to understand cross-national similarities and differences, such as the growing acceptance of multinational corporate ownership of national media companies and the continuing diversity of national content and responsibility standards imposed on those owners. The regime approach also invites us to see norms advanced by different players, rather than being blinded by the dominant role of media corporations and their norm of market deregulation. Thus, we can also look at regime politics from the standpoint of those who advocate higher standards of social responsibility for media companies that seek primarily to promote self-interested business models, or from the perspective of players who promote the responsibilities of states and international organizations to safeguard

public interests through licensing and privacy protections, content and technology standards, and ownership concentration rules. We can also see how various norms and practices are shaped by interactions between supranational entities (e.g., media conglomerates, trade organizations, technology standards agencies) and domestic politics (e.g., state regulatory agencies, parties, interests, and citizen activists). Finally, moving beyond the standard topic focus on corporate interests and the regulation of national mass media systems enables us to incorporate other aspects of global media, such as the Internet, into our analysis. Bringing the Internet into the global media picture reminds us that what we think of as media politics today may be transformed tomorrow. More importantly, including the Internet and other personal digital communication technologies in the analysis of global media helps us understand how some weaker players in the regime—media reform movements and social justice activists—have been empowered to challenge core regime norms and practices.

The media regime I am describing here draws its players primarily from Western democracies, and the normative bias in the present era of this regime is clearly toward neoliberal, deregulatory politics. Much of the Arab world and many authoritarian states shun this neoliberal media regime in favor of more tightly controlled national systems. (The advent of Al Jazeera and other Arabic news services may be signs of a rising Islamic media regime.) Other nations, such as China, sit on the edge of the Western regime, accepting some of its products but exerting purely nationalistic restrictions in ways that neither buy membership in the regime nor change its broader dynamics. For those primarily liberal democratic nations (in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand, parts of Asia, and much of South America) that constitute the main players in the regime, the common denominator involves some degree of receptiveness to normative pressures, internal and external, to deregulate media systems and open them to more concentrated private ownership.

If member nations open themselves to some degree of media market deregulation, including outside ownership, they may also engage various national (e.g., legislative) and international (e.g., World Trade Organization) processes to address domestic concerns, with the aim of resetting regime boundaries. Thus, even as the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiated agreements to open international trade in various media products, national commitments to public service media norms have so far prevented the WTO from “defining public broadcasting as uncompetitive, largely because of European opposition” (Ó Siochrú et al. 2002, p. 131). In response, media conglomerates such as Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation continue to lobby relentlessly in domestic arenas, from parliaments to the pages of their own papers, for removal of license fees and other government support for public service broadcasting. In this fashion, core norms and their practical applications are defended and contested at different political levels of the transnational regime.

This notion of a multilevel regime enables us to move from corporate conglomerates to the sensibilities of domestic politics and consumer audiences, all

by keeping the focus on norms and ideas as the constructive basis of the regime. The focus on contests over regime norms also helps to identify where effective challenges to the dominant deregulation ethos come from. Opponents of increasing deregulation include not only various states seeking protection for cultural standards and local media industries, but also the often overlooked media reformers and global activists who have raised their voices against media monopolies through impressive digital communication networks on the Internet.

This approach may seem similar to Putnam's (1988) model of international relations as two-level games in which domestic and international agents interact to produce various outcomes. However, as Sikkink (2003) notes, many international systems involve much more complex dynamics than a game situation in which bargaining is restricted to a few agents such as legislatures or heads of state. For example, the emergence of international norms against state-supported (or -tolerated) piracy in the eighteenth century involved multiple points of political engagement from states, business interests, and political factions within states, and of course the pirates themselves (Thomson 1990). The emergence of a global media regime is even more complex, with engagement by powerful corporations, numerous international organizations, domestic interests and political factions, emerging transnational social movements for media democracy, policy advocacy networks, and concerned citizens.

Although this system may seem enormously complex, coherence is provided by focusing on core contests over the norms and practices that constitute the regime: the free flow of products and information versus the rights of communities to impose political and cultural limits; commercialization and privatization of communication systems versus public interest protections for citizens and consumers; standardization of news and entertainment products versus national and cultural diversity; the right of business to compete and expand in world markets versus the protection of local production and ownership; and, of course, the degree to which citizen information flows should be regulated by design through public service systems or left to the often erratic outcomes of markets (Ó Siochrú et al. 2002). Following these normative dynamics of the regime moves us in the direction of Sikkink's definition of the "new transnationalism" in international relations: "The transnationalist research program is intrinsically linked to broader concerns within constructivist IR theory with the influence of ideas, norms, and identity on world politics" (Sikkink 2003, p. 3).

At the very least, this approach moves us away from irreconcilable scholarly differences based on ideology, anecdotal reasoning, and contrasts among different fragments of a larger system. Even more important, this perspective reminds us that global media politics is neither static nor deterministic. Conflicts swirl around the activities of the media giants, with ideological norms that favor free market growth pitted against opposing norms that seek restraint and regulation. When put in these terms, questions about the impact of the media regime at national and individual levels may become more empirically decidable.

INSIDE THE GLOBAL MEDIA REGIME

A starting point for analysis is to identify factors that shape contests over the key norms of the regime, such as those affecting ownership, content production and distribution, and social responsibility. The most important factors are outlined below and elaborated in the rest of this section.

- Multinational conglomerates and national media corporations that seek to advance commercial norms, namely concentrating ownership of production and distribution, dominating advertising markets, and placing profit considerations above social responsibility.
- International and domestic political institutions into which media businesses project their commercial norms, and that provide the main arenas for contesting them.
- Domestic publics within nations, both consumers of media content and citizens challenging that content.
- Digital media (e.g., Internet and Web) channels with global reach that are only partially integrated into commercial systems, which enable the distribution of political alternatives to commercialized content and the organization of grassroots protests against the regime.

Media Corporations: Redefining the Issues

If norms promoting neoliberal media deregulatory policies were not so popular, media giants would be less muscular, and surely less free to produce programming with so little public accountability. This means that the size of corporations may be less important to understand than the normative environments in which they operate and the quality of public information produced within those environments. Still, it is easy to see why discussions of the global media gravitate toward the breathtaking growth and shrinking number of corporations, along with the imitative predatory behaviors of second-tier national giants.

At the time of this writing, the global media market was dominated by as few as seven giant corporations that have grown at astonishing speed into vertically and horizontally integrated behemoths: Disney, (AOL) Time Warner, Sony, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi Universal, and Bertelsmann (McChesney 2001). A summary listing of the holdings of these companies would fill pages, and it would be outdated before this article is published. A useful source for tracking the growth of these corporations and debating their impact is the Media Channel (<http://www.mediachannel.org/ownership>). Some argue that the quest for dominance is, in itself, a political problem worth worrying about. For example, McChesney (2001) offers a simple model of corporate media behavior as imperialistic, involving these elements: (a) the race to conquer new territories (markets),

(b) the escape from national regulations and identifications that enables corporations to become semiautonomous world powers, and (c) the quest for size or scale, which aims at depriving markets of alternative sources of products.

Although this seems a good account of corporate motives, even as the moguls themselves talk about them, I see several problems with focusing more on imperialistic motives than on the conflicts over regime norms that determine how those motives work, in practice, in different national contexts. One problem with the focus on size and scale is that the corporate behemoths are anything but stable, well-organized machines (as the notion of imperial conquest would imply). Many have failed to create profitable integrations of their vast holdings, much less achieve the synergies across product lines and delivery mechanisms that fuel the race for expansion (*Economist* 2002). Indeed, at the time of this writing, most of the giants listed above were divesting major holdings, eliminating divisions, or contemplating wholesale breakup. AOL Time Warner was struggling over internal organization and external image problems to the point of contemplating removal of “AOL” from the company name—signaling the failure of this record merger to deliver its promised convergence of content and media platforms. Bertelsmann’s CEO Thomas Middlehoff once dismissed concerns about its acquisition of a large share of US book and music markets by saying that Bertelsmann was no longer a German company; later profitability problems raised questions about its entry into those markets in the first place. Former Vivendi Universal chief Frank Biondi aired the conventional corporate wisdom that “99% of the success of these companies” would be found “in successful execution offshore” (McChesney 2001). At the time of this writing, Vivendi was trying to sell off its far-flung and disastrously unprofitable Universal media and entertainment assets. In short, imperial motives do not always yield successful empires.

Another challenge to the media-imperialism argument is that the metaphor breaks down when applied to communication conceived as territory. The territory being conquered by the media giants is only partly physical (i.e., consumer audience demographics). Perhaps the more interesting part of media territory is the transmission and reception capacity, which is expanding thanks to technological innovation in digital communications. If there were only so much space to conquer, the gobbling up of channels and bands might present a larger problem. But in an expanding universe, large corporations must compete not only with each other but often within themselves, resulting in many of the organizational fiascoes witnessed in recent years among the corporate behemoths (Compaigne & Gomery 2000).

Next comes the argument that although the global giants may be carving up the European and North American markets, these are merely two (albeit important) regions in the larger world picture. As noted above, other national and regional media systems (e.g., China, Islamic states, Russia, and cultural regions such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia) produce content that is culturally and, to varying degrees, politically apart from the neoliberal Western media regime. Some of these cultural flows even reach larger world audiences. Low-cost transmission and reception technologies enable programming to flow outward from

Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern producers to audiences in regional neighborhoods, as well as to large immigrant communities in Europe and North America (Sinclair et al. 1996).

Finally, even the global giants may produce news and content images that echo the concerns of transnational political activist networks (Bennett 2003a, Keck & Sikkink 1998), which appear to be surrounded by larger publics receiving news of global environmental, economic, trade, human rights, and labor problems through various media. A Pew survey of 44 nations found more diversity in national views on the benefits of globalization than a media hegemony model might predict (Pew Research Center 2003, p. 177). There were also considerable differences of opinion about the merits of antiglobalization protesters (Pew Research Center 2003, p. 187). Garnham suggests that the general public's political awareness of world system interdependence may be an unintended consequence of media globalization: "I would argue that historically both the economic and political aspects of system rationality have not only become global but are understood as global by a growing proportion of the world's population, in part precisely because of the growth and spread of global systems of mediated communication" (Garnham 1992, p. 369).

These challenges to the media imperialism argument encourage us to be somewhat more careful in thinking about what the media conglomerates actually contribute to this transnational media regime. I propose that we look beyond the growth and domination motives of the corporations and consider that these corporate players share a remarkably common normative policy agenda, the aggressive promotion of which constitutes one political pole of the regime. Murdock (1990) outlined this agenda in terms of four stages of what I would call regime formation from the standpoint of the corporate players: "denationalization" (corporate business plans that remove companies from systematic national control or regulation), "liberalization" (pressures to relax ownership and competition rules within nations), "commercializing the public sector" (pressures to break public service television and radio monopolies by licensing commercial competition and reducing public funding, with the aim of forcing public service media corporations to take on commercial sponsors and develop ratings-based programming), and "reregulation" (policy initiatives that permit vertical and horizontal integration through multiple ownerships and acquisition of the means of production, distribution, licensing, and delivery of content across those multiple holdings).

These normative directives may reflect imperial corporate ambitions, but they do not automatically burst forth with uniform results in different nations. Understanding the neoliberal global media regime as a dynamic contest in which the normative corporate pole is contested by other regime players enables us to account for less deterministic outcomes, including failures of companies, the capacities of nations to resist deterioration of political content, and the rise of popular resistance and alternative communication channels. The next section reviews some of the settings in which these political contests take place.

Regime Politics in National and International Contexts

The next elements of this transnational media regime are the national and international political arenas in which the normative agendas of media companies encounter political support and opposition. These diverse political arenas (legislative, regulatory, judicial, trade organizations) may produce what appears to be a chaotic array of unique results, but their outputs can be understood as more general results of coalitions and policy networks struggling for or against the normative proposition of enabling media corporations to communicate their chosen content within and across borders. For example, when viewed purely as national cases, many countries appear unique. However, the regime model would lead us to expect national variation in media ownership and political content to be a function of differential national engagement with the norms, corporations, and policy institutions of the global media regime.

UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH REGIME POLITICS The Italian case is often reduced to the particularity of Silvio Berlusconi's media empire and his influence in Italian politics (Stratham 1996). Yet Berlusconi has behaved in near perfect accordance with the corporate regime norms outlined in the previous section—even to the extent that his domestic political influence raised charges of corruption. Moreover, Berlusconi also behaved in accordance with the aspiration to “go transnational,” as evidenced by his ill-fated early entry into the French market in the 1980s and his more successful later ventures. The civic impact of his Italian activities began with the sweeping commercialization of Italian television and culminated in aligning the political content of TV news with the new populist politics of Berlusconi's own party (Stratham 1996). Mazzolini (1995) argues that television has now taken over the role of parties in mobilizing a populist, right wing electoral response in Italy.

Although Italy may be a somewhat extreme case because of the dissolution of barriers between the corporate media and the state, other nations display their own distinctive domestic mechanisms that define their engagement with the global media regime. It is clear, for example, that Japan was a late entrant in media regime politics. Various pressures combined to relax restrictions on concentration of media ownership, leading to the proliferation of channels and a diversification in news and entertainment content. Only some of the change can be attributed to external pressures to open the market to outside competition from BBC, CNN, and Murdoch. Decisive domestic initiatives also arose from government policy circles and national electronics companies that saw the closed market as stifling Japan's development of new communications technologies (Hanson 1997). Once again, the domestic politics that motivated Japan to join the regime may seem unique, but once it joined, the result was a characteristic mix of mergers, joint ventures, and the influence of external content formats, particularly in the area of news.

Critics argue that the flow of commercialized news images standardizes political content on terms cued by Western governments and authorities. This may

be true. At the same time, there is strong evidence that the pre-regime Japanese press system was hardly a model of quality, diversity, or autonomy from government news management (Freeman 2000). Indeed, many observers have argued that deregulation has brought an overall improvement in the diversity and quality of news and public affairs programming on Japanese television (Friedland 1994, Hanson 1997, Sender 1994). A similar argument seems to apply to Mexico based on findings that private television introduced less partisan bias in coverage of the 2000 state elections than state television, which suffered continuing corruption from the parties in power (Hughes & Lawson 2003). These cases suggest that some national media systems may gain in civic information quality from joining the regime, while others may lose.

Cultural receptivity is also a factor in understanding regime behavior at the national level. For example, some nations that are open to market and content deregulation may exhibit consumer tastes that mesh poorly with the generic product models of global media corporations. McChesney (2001) argues that this often results in multinational corporations simply buying national assets or signing distribution deals that give them some control over local content production. This was the model that Sony applied in Brazil. At the same time, such arrangements facilitate the export of Brazilian music to global audiences—which is hard to find overly objectionable.

Cultural barriers account for uneven engagement with the regime in other national media markets as well. For example, the deregulation of a rather dismal Indian state television monopoly in the 1980s produced a flowering of channels and outlets for a thriving internal (Bollywood) film and television industry (Thussu 1997). Indian domestic interests and political cultures have been less resistant to the domination of Indian national news by global generic content providers such as WTN, Reuters, and APTV, whose feeds appear in local programs and echo through imports from Murdoch (Sky News), BBC, and CNN (Thussu 1997).

The case of France represents another variant of the interaction between domestic politics and culture and various arenas of regime contest. The French case was characterized by domestic political receptivity in the form of a breakdown of a center-right proregulatory consensus in the early 1980s. This receptivity was balanced by state-sanctioned cultural selectivity, a combination that accounts for French acceptance of some regime norms and fierce resistance to others (Kuhn 1995). The French case is also interesting because it enables us to see how national politics often crosses into international venues. France has long been a player in international arenas, from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) initiatives for a New World Information and Communication Order in the 1970s to more recent WTO negotiations over cultural products.

INTERNATIONAL VENUE-SHOPPING Many nations engage international venues to reconcile internal and external deregulatory pressures against countervailing

domestic pressures for the protection of local culture industries, the imposition of moral codes (including government and religious censorship), or the maintenance of public service broadcast or newspaper subsidies. Among the most interesting political stories in this area is the proliferation of international regulatory venues to accommodate this political bargaining (Ó Siochrú et al. 2002).

Sweden, for example, has become a leader in efforts to restrict WTO jurisdiction over cultural products. Shopping among international venues has also enabled Sweden to use its term as chair of the European Union in 2001 to initiate EU legislation modeled on Swedish regulations that protect children from advertising (McChesney 2001). Such examples of national engagement with international arenas suggest fierce struggles to define and delimit the impact of regime norms within nations.

The presence of struggle over the norms that guide policies does not necessarily mean that those seeking to protect national prerogatives are winning the day. It is important to step back and take a broader look at how the trends are playing out. As with many transnational regimes (whether they involve environmental standards, human rights, trade, or nuclear arms control), some players have more resources than others. It is often argued that the most relentless push for international media market deregulation has come from the United States (McChesney 2001, Ó Siochrú et al. 2002). Not surprisingly, the overlapping normative biases of US media corporations and political elites have made America the poster case for the erosion of political information quality. Breathtaking transformations of American news and journalism standards have occurred during the period of sweeping deregulation and media consolidation that began in the mid 1980s and has continued with little interruption through both Democratic and Republican administrations of the 1990s and early 2000s. American media corporations and government trade officials have pushed aggressively for US-style market access in international arenas as well.

GENERAL TENDENCIES IN NATIONAL MEDIA SYSTEMS ENGAGED WITH THE REGIME
Although many nations have resisted the full regime effects that have been visited upon the United States, it is possible to identify three general trends that occur to varying degrees in most nations that have engaged with the regime. These forces play out differently depending on the levels of domestic political resistance and the state's continuing public service commitment sustained after engagement with the regime. The trends include (a) general depoliticization of commercial media content environments, (b) more specific introductions of infotainment, tabloid, and antipolitics formulas in news content, and (c) struggles in public service systems over audience declines and pressures to adopt less "highbrow" and more commercial content formulas.

Depoliticization of media content environments Adbusters, a North American consumer activist organization, tested the openness of publicly licensed commercial media space in the United States by trying to buy airtime to run a commercial

promoting its campaign for an annual day of consumer freedom called “Buy Nothing Day.” After years of trying, no media outlet would run the ad (except for CNN, which eventually capitulated). When corporate executives were challenged about their decisions to reject the paid, well-produced, humorous spot, their explanations were instructive. The Vice President of advertising standards at General Electric/NBC said, “We don’t want to take any advertising that’s inimical to our legitimate business interests.” A Westinghouse Corp./CBS official went so far as to declare that Buy Nothing Day was “in opposition to the current economic policy in the United States” (Hertz 2001, p. 6).

Price (1996) argues that domestic politicians and broadcasters often become tacit partners in setting the communication tone for consumer societies. As broadcasters become active boosters for market values, “TV programming develops a new form of neutrality; its managers become coadministrators of the global culture of consumption. . .” (Price 1996, p. 17). Price also contends that the shift to consumerism as the core public value in many Western democracies is generally accompanied by a political consensus favoring neoliberal economic policies and related political discourses on the part of parties and other state actors. This consensus often includes labor and former left parties that compete for middle class votes by offering consumer-oriented tax and social policies. The rebranding of the political left, from the Clinton “new Democrats” to Third Way labor parties in Britain, Germany, and Sweden, typically weakens domestic opposition to consolidation in commercial media sectors. The result is that—with the important national variations noted above—commercial market formulas are allowed to drive program content, cultural offerings, and public affairs formats.

Price (1996, p. 17) concludes that this transformation of media content makes globalization at the national level “virtually synonymous with a tendency toward depoliticisation, part of an effort by the state to diminish the potency of the media to disturb the status quo.” A prime indicator of this depoliticization of media content is the transformation of news. Mainstream journalism becomes a litmus test for the degree of elite neoliberal political consensus within nations—both because commercial news organizations favor center-right policy discourse and because politicians (i.e., the prime news sources) operating within that discourse generate little news that falls outside of it.

Format shifts in news and public affairs content One of the most general properties of this regime is that news formats in more commercialized media systems tend to display a mix of infotainment (consumer trends, fashion, sports, celebrity gossip), sensationalism (sex, scandal, and violence), and political negativity (social and governmental dysfunction often emanating from politicians themselves and embellished by journalistic “discoveries” of scandal, waste, and excess). This “soft news” is cheap to produce, and it works reasonably well for the commercial purpose of grabbing audiences and delivering them to advertisers. An ironic result of these commercial news formulas in the United States may be an overall loss of audience due to sheer alienation of many citizens (Bennett 2003b,

pp. 82–120; Bennett 2004; Patterson 2000). However, information formats and audience engagement patterns do not always line up so neatly.

One clear finding is that tabloid and infotainment trends are stronger in more fully commercialized media systems. Brants (1998) did not find clear infotainment trends in his content analyses of news in northern European nations with strong public service traditions. Esser (1999) found that the presumed tabloid trend depended on deregulatory market factors within nations. The tempting conclusion is that the civic corrosiveness of the neoliberal media regime may be checked in nations that continue to support autonomous public service news organizations. But there are other problems in public service land, as Gunther & Mughan (2000, p. 442) summarize from research on ten nations, including cases from Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, and Latin America:

At a minimum, the empirical studies presented in this volume debunk the current conventional wisdom that market forces and the minimization of the role of the state and public sector entities will enhance the quality of democracy. Indeed, a clear pattern has emerged from the overview: in the established democracies of the West, the stronger the dominance of the commercial broadcast media, the less the policy-relevant information content of television broadcasts. . . . Conversely, public sector broadcasting in all of the established democracies surveyed here is characterized by more extensive coverage of public affairs, the conveyance of a greater volume of policy-relevant information, and a more scrupulous respect for journalistic norms of impartiality toward parties, politicians, and politics in general. Unfortunately, following the deregulatory trends set in motion in the 1980s, as more and more commercial broadcasting channels have been established, the public-service ethic has been progressively weakened and citizens exposed to less policy-relevant information. Indeed, most of them can now avoid television coverage of politics altogether.

The caveat here is that even if infotainment has not become the norm in public service cultures, the loss of audiences creates, perhaps, a larger problem for mediated civic engagement. As explained below in a discussion of the role of publics and audiences, the decline of political audiences cannot be attributed solely to the corrosive effects of commercial media content. Audience members—both as citizens and consumers—must also be understood as players in regime politics. Indeed, the audience-as-public becomes a key to understanding why sustaining distinctive public service standards is often such a struggle.

The struggle to sustain public service broadcast standards Strong commitments to politically independent public service broadcasting continue to distinguish many nations, particularly in northern Europe, Britain, and Scandinavia. These nations offer citizens distinct choices in political information, and they often enter international policy arenas to protect those options. The dilemma, however, is that even nations that uphold commitments to public service media have experienced audience erosion—a problem compounded by difficulties in finding attractive formats

for presenting important democratic events such as elections (Blumler & Kavanagh 1999).

Part of the problem may be that commercial competitors give citizens just enough information to satisfy minimal civic interests, while raising questions about why citizen tax or license monies should continue funding expensive public service operations when “free” news and entertainment abounds in the commercial sector. Smith (1991, pp. 18–19) reports on a poll taken in Britain among readers of three different Murdoch papers, all of which had editorialized relentlessly against public broadcast subsidies as anticompetitive and wasteful. In the late 1980s, *The Times*, *Today*, and *The Sun* were positioned for three very different demographic markets—the upper, middle, and popular/working class, respectively. Surveys of the general population routinely found these three groups responding very differently on the question of support for public broadcasting subsidies, yet all three registered strong views against the license subsidy in the poll of the Murdoch media audience.

Another part of the audience erosion problem may be that even though public service and high-quality news organizations attempt to cover politics in depth, there is really not very much to report because of the shallowness of press-source interactions that are increasingly managed by communication professionals. Indeed, the movement toward a neoliberal consensus in the mainstream politics of many nations, when combined with the near-universal adoption of bloodless professional communication formulas, may have left the press with little chewy material to report even if they have the resources and space to do it (Blumler & Kavanagh 1999). Under such circumstances, in-depth political coverage may be more off-putting to audiences than the same events packaged as breezy infotainment fare.

Another possibility, and one that introduces the next element of our regime model, is that the same processes of globalization that have swept societies at high economic and social levels also affect the social identities of citizens in ways that radically transform their information habits. The challenge to both commercial and public service news organizations in societies with changing citizen identities is how to transmit information meaningfully to audiences that no longer resemble the relatively homogeneous national audiences of the mass society era. Citizens operating in more fragmented societies such as the United States appear to be seeking much more personalized relations to politics (Schudson 1998). The result may be highly individualized information needs that mass communication news and public information models are poorly equipped to satisfy. This citizen identity shift makes media audiences within nations important players in the media regime, whether they are the less engaged citizen-consumers who favor lighter content or the more activist citizens who find even high-quality conventional news sources inadequate because they are aimed at an outdated model of citizenship.

Citizens as Audiences: Identity and Information

The agency of citizens must be included in any analytical framework on the quality of public information flows, global and national. Not only do citizens-as-audiences create demand for particular types of content, but, increasingly, with the

proliferation of new media such as the Internet, citizens have unprecedented capacities to produce and distribute their own information to large and influential audiences both within and across national boundaries. In recent years, this citizen production capacity has resulted in direct challenges to the neoliberal economic regime in general and to the global media regime in particular, as discussed in the next section.

In assessing the citizen-audience, we must be careful not to reduce the analysis to simple demand and supply arguments that would suggest—as many advocates of the deregulatory regime do—that commercial news content trends are the most perfect reflections of citizen information demands. Indeed, some observers argue that contemporary citizens may need little more than a background monitor on their environments for developments that may affect them personally (Baum 2002, Schudson 1998, Zaller 2003). Such minimalist views of public information generally find the transformation of news unproblematic, and they implicitly assume that citizens are somehow driving the information process. Yet there are at least two market distortions that are relatively independent of audience demand and that affect the supply of political information to citizens: the imperfect responsiveness of the democratic institutions that produce much of the information that becomes news, and the corporate profit considerations that further discount this raw news material with considerations of journalism costs and the commercial value of the audiences attracted to different news formats. Both of these information market distortions tend to be stronger in nations that have more fully embraced the neoliberal media regime.

Political distortions in information markets are relevant to media consolidation in the sense that formulaic journalism is typically less capable of producing information that originates outside of official sources. Where nations have moved toward neoliberal, market-oriented policy consensus in government, and where government officials have embraced professionalized news management, the result is often a desultory information product for journalists, even if that product promotes successful access to power (Cook 1998). As American political marketing guru Paul Weyrich once famously remarked about the selective audience for politically managed communication: “I don’t want everyone to vote. Our leverage in the election quite candidly goes up as the voting population goes down” (Ferguson & Rogers 1981, p. 4).

Subsequent filtering of the raw political product through the cost-profit calculus of production and audience demographics creates added distortions in the targeted audience-publics for which political news is devised. Perhaps the most important conflict between commercialized news and democracy is that market-driven news is explicitly biased against some demographic segments of society and in favor of others. Commercial news operations—to the extent that they are not held to public responsibility standards—have discovered that not all market demand is profitable to satisfy. The United States, again, may be the worst case of this trend among the more developed democracies. The 1990s witnessed the largest profit boom in the history of American newspapers, which coincided with a conscious

sacrifice of commercially unprofitable readership (Bennett 2003b, pp. 82–120). Further evidence that commercial media formulas seek to restructure markets (as much as respond to them) comes from research showing that high-quality television newscasts compete well with tabloid news in local markets. However, the infotainment fare is simply more profitable to produce, and is thus favored by profit-maximizing corporations in the absence of regulatory limits or incentives (Bennett 2003b, pp. 82–120; Rosenstiel et al. 2000). Although the American case may be the most advanced, there is evidence that similar trends are emerging in many nations as local media are purchased by global media giants (Lang 2004). Since few models of democracy advocate communicating with citizens according to their commercial viability, this might seem to be an inherent problem with deregulated commercial news media.

However, as noted above, this pattern of commercial exclusion does not fully account for audience erosion in nations where clear public service news choices are available. The best account of this is the political identity shift that is occurring among many citizens in globalizing societies, particularly in the younger generation. As individuals are shaken from broad social identity formations such as class, church, labor association, and party, they seek more personalized approaches to politics, government, and public problems (Inglehart 1997). This shift in citizen identity creates dilemmas both for politicians seeking to communicate effectively with large publics and for journalists seeking to reach mass audiences without resorting to tabloid sensationalism (Bennett 1998).

It is useful to remember that both the age of autonomous national media systems and the mass citizen-audiences they served reflect only a brief equilibrium point in the evolution of modern Western civic cultures. The present age of global economic change and international interdependence has resulted in varying degrees of fragmentation in both mass societies and communication channels in the Western democracies. These trends are associated with weakened patterns of citizen identification with political and social institutions (Putnam 2000, Rahn & Rudolph 2001). The current era of social and personal disequilibrium is often referred to as a “late modern society” in which both politics and information must appeal to increasingly personalized, identity-based considerations (Bennett 1998, Bennett & Entman 2001, Giddens 1991). It may be true that both neoliberal media and the political regimes of this era are actively constructing citizens as consumers, but the same root social and economic conditions underlying the neoliberal economic regime seem to be independently transforming civic identities, along with the practices of citizenship and information use.

These changes in citizenship may account for a large part of the difficulty in delivering standard mass society news formats—no matter how detailed or seemingly consequential they may be—to audiences whose members are increasingly parsing information in highly personal terms. This identity shift means, among other things, that news and information systems cannot simply go back in time to the seemingly rosier days of mass news audiences. Evidence of these changing identity formations and information habits is found in pronounced generational

differences in news habits, as younger citizens indicate strong preferences for more personalized, interactive information of the sort found in Web environments such as blogs (Graber 2001).

The impending loss of the next-generation news audience accounts for the mad scramble for interactivity in both public service and commercial news organizations. Many of these organizations are finding that the type of interactivity clearly matters. The click polls, chats, and personalized news pages of first-generation news interactivity have proved only marginally helpful, whether for improving the quality of news formats or securing audience loyalty. As a result, even quality public service organizations such as the BBC are currently moving beyond earlier substantial investments in personalized Web functions toward more aggressive involvement of audiences in content development. Recent technologies permit audiences to actively participate in setting news agendas and producing news itself. The emergence of bottom-up citizen information channels presents serious issues for conventional notions of journalism (Bennett 2004).

One interesting example of the willingness of individuals to create their own information environments outside of official governmental and authoritative journalistic sanctioning is the large-scale organization of transnational politics to challenge various aspects of economic globalization. Indeed, many of the digital communication technologies that enabled the formation of a global business economy in the first place have subsequently been adapted by activists to coordinate and inform their efforts to exact greater political accountability from that economic regime. More importantly for the shape of global media politics, there now exists something of an alternative global media system that has thus far proved fairly resistant to commercial consolidation. The infrastructure of the Internet and the Web—along with a profusion of open-source democracy-building communication technologies—offers activists valuable resources in challenging the media regime.

Dissent and the Rise of New Global Media Networks

An analytical framework of global media and politics must include the Internet for several reasons: because of its capacity to distribute diverse political content across national borders, because of its importance for an incipient media democracy movement (e.g., <http://www.mediareform.org>), and because of the coordination of more generalized resistance to the neoliberal economic regime that favors the aims of the global media conglomerates (Bennett 2003a, World Social Forum 2003).

Including the Internet (and other digital technologies) as part of a global media system—particularly in the mobilization of dissent—requires addressing several possible objections. Some observers argue that the Web is similar to the conventional media in terms of news and information colonization by existing news organizations that do little more than shovel their regular content online, resulting in a commercialized public space that is not even distinctively global (Sparks 2001). This ignores the high volume of alternative citizen and organization-produced information sites. Many critics dismiss such sources as undependable, yet surveys of

Internet users increasingly show that people find ways of checking this information and continue to elevate the Web among their primary information sources (Cole 2003). Moreover, many “netactivists” are developing technologies for rating the quality of information and the credibility of sources (Jordan et al. 2003).

On the question of political impact, conventional wisdom among many political scientists once tended toward a “minimal effects” view of the Internet and Web as merely extending the communication styles and goals of conventional political organizations (Davis 1999). Even the early studies of world information flows saw the uses of distributed digital media networks as primarily promoting the growth of the neoliberal economic regime (Carnoy et al. 1993). It is increasingly clear, however, that alternative politics is thriving on the net, and that many grassroots organizations and individuals have adopted digital network communication models as primary forms of mobilization, organization, and information (Bennett 2003a, Graber et al. 2004).

Finally, some observers argue that the isolation of “netizens” from the mass media limits the capacity to create large-scale publics, or even to sustain long-term political organization (Castells 1997). However, there are many indicators that different types of media are increasingly linked by information flows across the levels of micro media (email, lists, phones, personal blogs), middle media (websites, organization information sites, high-traffic blogs, protest hubs), and mass media (newspapers, television, and other conventional modes) (Bennett 2003a). Personal digital media enable the spontaneous coordination of crowd events such as swarms and smart mobs (Rheingold 2002), as well as help to sustain activist campaigns and coordinate protest calendars (Bennett 2003a).

The proliferation of dense networks of resistance communicated through micro, middle, and mass media channels helps account for the rise of large-scale, simultaneous protests such as the iconic “Battle in Seattle” against the 1999 meetings of the WTO and the antiwar demonstrations of February 15, 2003, in which an estimated ten million activists took to the streets in dozens of nations to protest US plans to invade Iraq. The coordination of protest on this scale appears to have emerged from delegates at meetings of the World Economic Forum in Brazil and the European Social Forum in Italy, who met only a few weeks before the simultaneous demonstrations rolled out on a scale that surprised mass media news organizations and governments alike.

Nowhere is this large-scale communication networking more developed than in the politics of activists challenging the broader global economic regime from which the media regime draws its intellectual and political support. Many players in this global social justice movement aim to construct new political accountability mechanisms based on social responsibility norms shared by corporations, world banking and development agencies, and consumers and citizens. Rebalancing social values and business prerogatives would represent a major alteration in political power arrangements based on control over communication channels. One observer sums up this potential scenario like this: “We might then equally look forward to a world which increases the power of large-scale multinationals and where new

possibilities for interrupting the discourses of the powerful are utilized by citizens and new social movements alike” (Stevenson 2000, p. 204).

With the aim of creating a counter media system, activists have found rich possibilities for networking, sharing and archiving information, and developing software for reputation assessment, trust-building, open publishing, collective editing, and network self-organizing (Jordan et al. 2003). These rich experiments in democratic communication and grassroots organization hold the promise of liberating large numbers of individuals from top-down mass media as the exclusive means of sharing and communicating political information with other citizens (Bennett 2003a, 2004). A primary source of uncertainty about the future of this citizen-driven global media system is that the prospects for political independence of the Internet are uncertain. Battles are under way over commercial regulation, censorship, service provision, access, privacy, and the openness of the software source codes that enable communication.

The political flowering of the Internet is due partly to its current sprawling and relatively unregulated status. One observer makes the bold claim that there are currently “no multilateral organizations concerned with world information flows and the impact of new technology” (Ferguson 1998, p. 252). Such observations are generally followed by calls for regulation, including progressive regulation to address problems of “digital divide” and north-south communication imbalances. Yet, this regulatory urge should be tempered by caution about the unintended consequences of regulating communication technologies that are developing their social applications faster than regulators may fully understand. As Pool (1983, 1990) warned, it is important not to regulate communication technologies until we are absolutely sure what their uses might be in human society. The danger of bringing Internet regulation into conventional national and international institutions currently engaged with the neoliberal media regime is that policy fights may naturally emphasize past-era conflicts over commerce versus old models of citizen information. If digital communication technologies are to develop more fully into dense networks that enable grassroots challenges to the transnational media regime, their regulation needs to be guided by their most innovative users. Only the democratic governance of our most democratic media will facilitate what Falk (1997) calls “globalization from below.”

CONCLUSION

The analysis of global media politics needs to be expanded beyond concerns about levels of ownership concentration. The regime model places global media politics in the context of (a) the normative considerations driving media concentration as one pole of a larger political contest over media and democracy, (b) how national and international policy institutions accommodate or resist this normative order, (c) how citizen identity patterns alter the demand for political information, creating challenges even for quality news organizations that seek alternatives to infotainment, and (d) how personal digital communication

technologies facilitate new patterns of civic engagement, including movements against global media concentration and other neoliberal economic globalization trends.

This regime model avoids several conceptual pitfalls in thinking about media and democracy. First, the model reminds us that global media concentration, in and of itself, does not necessarily suppress the diversity of information available in national public spheres. It also cautions against assuming that more independent national news and public information systems necessarily produced better citizen information before—or worse public information after—contact with external corporate competition. The regime model also cautions against assuming that the practices of citizenship, information-seeking, and political engagement have remained constant during recent periods of global change in national social, economic, and communication systems. For example, younger-generation citizens who operate with changing understandings of civic life and citizen responsibility may not respond favorably to the restoration of more conventional mass media political information formats, even if they could be restored. Perhaps the most important contribution of this model is the focus on the new communication technologies that commercial media seem least capable of controlling or rendering profitable. The rise of these new global communication channels holds the greatest promise for reconciling current tensions among markets, media, citizens, and democratic order.

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ACTORS, NORMS, AND IMPACT: Recent International Cooperation Theory and the Influence of the Agent-Structure Debate

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■ **Abstract** This article reviews three recent developments in international cooperation theory: the introduction of nonstate actors, the study of norms and ideas, and increased examination of the effectiveness, or impact, of international cooperation. Through the lens of the agent-structure debate, we critique the literature that addresses these themes. We argue, first, for a view of structure that goes beyond material properties; second, that more attention could be paid to what distinguishes agency in actors; and third, that this would provide insights into how reflexivity and learning, as well as preference and identity formation, contribute to structural transformation in the international system through iterated processes of cooperation. We also develop ways of applying the agent-structure debate to empirical as well as metatheoretical questions. The article concludes by discussing directions for further research.

INTRODUCTION

The publication of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* in 1979 marked a watershed in North American international relations (IR) theory, and has engendered waves of intellectual endeavor that continue to this day. This review focuses on two in particular. First, "neoliberal institutionalism" challenged the more pessimistic realist/neorealist view that cooperation among states was a temporary phenomenon, driven by states' self-interest. This challenge opened up new fields of study of cooperation as a vital activity, as well as generating more attention to institutions from realist scholars (Jervis 1999). Second, on a metatheoretical level, another group of scholars challenged Waltz's agent-centric view of world politics. By importing the agent-structure debate, which has existed under different names at least since medieval times, into IR, these scholars challenged others to (at least) reflect on the underlying ontological and epistemological

aspects of their work, and to examine more rigorously processes of transformation of the international system (Carlsnaes 1992, Dessler 1989, Wendt 1987). For many years, these debates had little to say to each other beyond critique (e.g., Ashley 1986, Gilpin 1986). However, in recent years, some areas of dialogue have emerged that offer possibilities for constructive theory-building, in addition to cogent analyses of the reasons for this lack of communication (Hasenclever et al. 2000, Kratochwil & Ruggie 1986). This essay seeks to encourage and expand this dialogue and its theory-building potential by demonstrating (a) how cooperation theory could benefit from greater attention to the agent-structure debate and (b) how it has explored empirically what the agent-structure debate has so far failed to guide.

In the past few years, theories on international cooperation have devoted considerable attention to three substantive themes: nonstate actors (NSAs), transnational norms and ideas, and the effectiveness of cooperation.

- *Nonstate actors*: An increasing number of NSAs are playing important roles in international cooperation, including international organizations, transnational social movements, private industry, and epistemic communities. Much of this work suggests an erosion of the authority of nation-states as the primary units of analysis at the international level.
- *Transnational norms and ideas*: The emergence of shared, transnational norms and ideas is important in generating lasting cooperation. It is generated by cooperation and is transmitted to domestic politics. This literature marks a departure from earlier emphases on material capacities (e.g., wealth and economic power) in determining the nature and extent of international cooperation. Researchers aim for a more constructivist understanding of how states and NSAs interact and learn from each other, and how actor preferences and identities are formed.
- *Regime effectiveness*: The effects of cooperation are a growing concern, especially in the international environmental politics literature. Questions in this field of study concern how well states comply with agreements, what measures they undertake to implement them, and to what extent the agreements or regimes actually resolve the problems they were designed to address.

These new directions in cooperation theory push at the standard core of work to date in several ways. In particular, cooperation has conventionally been defined as the deliberate and coordinated adjustment of policies by states attempting to solve a mutual problem or achieve mutual gains (following Milner 1992). But recent work, especially on the emergence and maturation of international environmental regimes, requires an augmentation of this initial definition. In the expanded definition, cooperation comprises iterated processes, which continue beyond initial agreements and result in complex and enduring governance orders and potential social change (see also P. Haas 1998). For example, although multilateral agreements are often weak, they generate activity and empower actors above and beyond their

basic terms and obligations and contain adaptive mechanisms to further their aims over time. This argument was, incidentally, also central to the regional integration literature in the form of “spill-over” (E. Haas 1964).

A view of international cooperation as iterated processes requires more nuanced understandings of the nature of, and relationships between, international actors and their environments. It calls more attention to social processes such as learning, socialization, and identity change over time. The agent-structure debate made its appearance in IR theory as an attempt to transcend the limits of methodological individualism and structural determinism (to put the extremes somewhat crudely) in understanding international political transformation. The structurationist approach, championed initially by Alexander Wendt, from the works of Giddens (1984) and Bhaskar (1979), among others, sees neither agents nor structures as being ontologically prior, but rather as mutually constitutive, interacting with and shaping each other in ways that are not always materially apparent. Although the agent-structure debate has evolved at the metatheoretical level, its arguments have proven difficult to operationalize in empirical research. Yet recent developments are changing this. For example, research reviewed below seeks to explain how the preferences of actors—particularly state actors—may be influenced over time by NSAs, normative change, and/or international compliance assessment or enforcement institutions, challenging the assumption of preference exogeneity for which traditional cooperation theories have been criticized (Powell 1994, Wendt 1987).

This examination of recent themes in the IR cooperation literature highlights the shortcomings of this literature and points toward areas in which it can be strengthened by focusing on elements of agency (choice, reflexivity, transformative capacity, and learning) and structure (including material capacities, normative structures, and institutions) at several levels. In particular, this review suggests that some groundwork for a “new wave” of cooperation theory is emerging, which views cooperation as an iterated and nonlinear, decentralized and open-ended process that can have a transformative impact both on actors and on the operation of the international system (see also Conca 2004). This in turn leads us to a new, empirically grounded definition of social change and transformation, concepts so fundamental to the agent-structure debate. Contrasting views of social change as driven by either agents or structures have been criticized for being unable to explain the properties and causal powers of their units of analysis. The difficulty in settling on a definition of social change is that it implies a social ontology, that is, a statement about the nature of the social system and the properties of its parts. As we outline in the following sections, agent-centered (also called individualist or voluntarist) social theories consider structures epiphenomenal constructs that can be reduced to individuals and their interactions. In this view, social change consists of changes in individuals’ actions. Structural (or functional) social theories argue that individuals and their intentions are generated by their structural location. Hence, social change results from systemic transformation, such as in the modes of production or political organization.

The approaches we discuss here are based on a dualist social ontology that assumes a mutually constitutive relationship between analytically autonomous agents and structures. Correspondingly, we define social change as a process by which the interaction between agents and structures creates new possibilities for collective action by changing norms and institutions, as well as the evolution of existing and emergent actors (and their interactions) who are both enabled and constrained in the pursuit of their goals.

The following section briefly outlines the emergence of international cooperation as an object of study. Section three reviews the agent-structure debate, paying particular attention to its definitions of key terms and its relevance to cooperation. Section four assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the three recent trends we have identified in cooperation theory. The conclusion pulls these sections together and assesses how this conversation between two very different schools of thought in the field of IR may be furthered to achieve real theoretical progress in our understanding of the workings and impacts of international cooperation.

TRADITIONAL COOPERATION THEORY

International cooperation is traditionally defined as occurring “when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others, through a process of policy coordination” (Milner 1992, p. 467 citing Keohane 1984). Questions in the field have revolved around the emergence of cooperation, its motivations (absolute versus relative gains), and its extent and durability, especially above and beyond the particular interests of states.

The evolution of cooperation theory roughly mirrored (and sometimes drove) theoretical and epistemological shifts in the general field of IR. The central question of cooperation was initially defined as why states, existing in an atomistic, anarchic, “Hobbesian” international system (characterized by a “war of all against all”) would cooperate with each other in the first place (Waltz 1979). The widely used metaphor of the Prisoners’ Dilemma Game captured this view quite well—states would be deterred from long-term cooperation, thus failing to realize potential gains, because the possibility of defection by partners in the first round could leave them far worse off than before (Oye 1986). This view reflects certain underlying assumptions by realist and neorealist theorists about the international system: that states (rational, unitary actors) were primarily concerned with their own survival in the international order (thus, security concerns dominated), that the Great Powers dominated the system, and that anarchy—the absence of sovereign global authority—was the key ordering principle that structured state behavior. Under this view, military alliances—short-term cooperation among a limited number of states intended to counter an immediate threat to them all—could be easily explained under the rubric of national interests (Jervis 1983). Once the goal was reached, or national interests changed, the alliance would dissolve. A major challenge to this view of the world came from the emergence of multilateral international

economic regimes, especially in trade and finance, after World War II. Realist theory explained these phenomena using hegemonic stability theory: The cooperative order was set up and maintained by a Great Power—in the postwar years, the United States—that was both willing and able to maintain cooperative economic orders (Kindleberger 1973, Snidal 1985).

Perhaps the most basic assumption of realist/neorealist theory, the one that distinguishes it from other mainstream theoretical approaches in IR, is that states are primarily concerned with maximizing their relative gains vis-à-vis other states (Powell 1991) and, overall, with maximizing their own security. As international cooperation became a durable and widespread phenomenon, new theoretical approaches emerged to explain it, particularly regime theory (Krasner 1983) and neoliberal institutionalism (associated primarily with Keohane 1984, 1986). These approaches did not alter the core assumptions of neorealism (state centrism, states as rational unitary actors); their main challenge to the dominant approach lay in their claim that states were interested in maximizing their own absolute, rather than relative, gains. This claim opened an opportunity to study cooperation as a common, rather than rare, phenomenon that could transcend states' narrow concerns with their own relative positions. By studying regimes as intervening and even independent variables, the essays in *International Regimes* (Krasner 1983) further opened the field of cooperation theory. These works are associated primarily with the subfield of international political economy. The problems suggested by the durability of cooperation were cheating and free-riding in the absence of regime transparency and adequate monitoring (see also Baldwin 1993).

Following critiques of the US theoretical mainstream and the integration of insights from the "English School" (Bull 1977), the field has opened up to a plethora of scholarly work that questions the basic assumptions underlying traditional epistemologies. During the 1990s, "cognitivist" regime theory (reviewed in Hasenclever et al. 1997, 2000) began to shape the intellectual agenda of cooperation research and theorizing. In its "weak" form—focusing "on the role of causal beliefs in regime formation and change" (Hasenclever et al. 2000, p. 10)—it began to be integrated with neoliberal institutionalist approaches early on (Goldstein & Keohane 1993, Nye 1987, Puchala & Hopkins 1983). Subsequently, it has blossomed into a much larger literature on the role of norms and ideas in IR theory that has some overlap with the more constructivist areas of IR theory (see, for example, Finnemore & Sikkink 1998). "Strong cognitivist," or constructivist, approaches also "emphasize the social character of international relations. . . but rather than causal beliefs they accentuate social knowledge (i.e., knowledge of norms and understandings of self and other)" (Hasenclever et al. 2000, pp. 10–11). In their terms, states and their understandings of themselves and others are co-constituted with the international system in which they interact. The pull that these knowledge-based or cognitivist approaches have exerted on scholars is starting to generate new work in cooperation theory, especially as the effects of cooperation become more apparent and durable.

THE AGENT-STRUCTURE DEBATE

International cooperation involves the collective, purposive behavior of state and NSAs whose efforts shape and are shaped by material and nonmaterial forces. Although this view requires prior assumptions about the nature of actors, structures, and their relationship, international cooperation theory has paid scant attention to the corresponding metatheoretical discussion. Such negligence, some have argued, has left theorists unable to explain the “properties and causal powers of their primary units of analysis” (Wendt 1987, p. 337). On the one hand, voluntarist or agent-centric theories have assumed actors’ interests and identities to be outside the reach of structural influences and therefore have failed to explain preference formation. On the other hand, structural theories characterized by deterministic views of actor and behavior generation cannot explain system transformation and social change. If either agents or structures are seen as the mere effects of the other, causal arrows can flow in only one direction.

This theoretical divide in IR began to erode in the late 1980s, when scholars inspired by social theorists Anthony Giddens (1984), Roy Bhaskar (1979), and Margaret Archer (1985) challenged the methodological individualism and structuralism of prevailing IR theories (Carlsnaes 1992, Dessler 1989, Wendt 1987). Since then, participants in the agent-structure debate have focused on whether or not the problem can be solved (Doty 1997, Wight 1999), the need for the debate to go beyond its narrowly circumscribed dialogue (Suganami 1999), and calls to take into account poststructuralist emphases on subjectivity and indeterminacy (Bieler & Morton 2001). These lively exchanges have engendered little empirical work. One of the reasons for this relative dearth is arguably the difficulty of operationalizing the mutual constitution of agency and structure (Dessler 1989). Conceptually attractive, the proposed simultaneous and reciprocal causality has proven a significant epistemological obstacle.

Structure and agency are both widely applied concepts in social science and are among the most difficult to define. At the broadest level, the term structure “empowers what it designates. . . whatever aspect of social life we designate as structure is posited as ‘structuring’ some other aspect of social existence—whether it is class that structures politics. . . or modes of production that structure social formations” (Sewell 1992, p. 2). In IR, Wendt has argued that realists/neorealists define international system structures on the basis of observable attributes of nation-states (the “distribution of material capabilities”), whereas world system theorists characterize these structures in terms of the elementary organizing principles of the capitalist world economy that underlie and constitute states (Wendt 1987, p. 335). This deterministic definition of structure as generating actors’ interests and identities has started to give way to a definition that recognizes that structures also include nonmaterial elements (Finnemore 1996). Furthermore, structure has increasingly come to be seen as a process rather than a state. Giddens, for instance, defines structure as “rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems” (Giddens 1984, p. 377 cited in Sewell 1992, p. 5). Sewell (1992,

p. 19) views structures as “sets of mutually sustaining schemas and resources that empower and constrain social action and that tend to be reproduced by that social action.” Similarly, Wendt (1999, p. 139) argues that the structure of any social system contains three elements: material conditions, interests, and ideas.

Like structure, “agency” is always present but rarely defined (Doty 1997, p. 372). In structuration theory, agency denotes the ability to choose among different courses of action, to learn from previous experience, and to effect change. Social agency sometimes depends “solely upon the capability of actors to ‘make a difference’ in the production of definite outcomes, regardless of whether or not they intend (are aware) that these outcomes occur. Since ‘to make a difference’ is to transform some aspect of the process or event, agency in structuration theory is equated with transformative capacity” (Cohen 1987, p. 284). In his analysis of the European Union as an actor in international environmental politics, Vogler (1999) includes as criteria for “actorness” volition, autonomy, ability to employ policy instruments, and recognition by other actors. Such broad definitions of agency raise the question of whether all actors can be considered agents. Structuration theory implies that, in principle, all humans and their organizations (including states and NSAs) have the capacity for agency. Yet, the specific forms of agency may vary considerably, both because of the different structures they reproduce and are shaped by and because of actors’ unequal knowledge of rules and access to resources. In short, the more ideational elements are included in a definition of structure, the greater the likelihood that actors are also agents. Although many of the emerging types of NSAs may be unable to impact the material elements of structure, they have certainly been influential in shaping norms and ideas.

The agency-structure debate has led to more critical approaches in which the a priori rejection of predetermined and unchanging agents and structures has permitted a broader array of questions (Doty 1997, p. 382). Until now, IR approaches to the agent-structure problem have exhibited a high level of generality and abstractness that has frustrated researchers intent on incorporating postempiricist notions into empirical agendas. However, scholars who are willing to bridge meta-, mid-range, and substantive theories are rewarded with the ability to generate more complete understandings of social action and change. To this end, workable definitions and typologies of agents and structures, as well as analytical tools to explain and understand their interactions over time, are needed.

The agency-structure debate was initially concerned with criticizing state-centric theories of international relations. Consequently, most analyses addressed the relationships between states (agents) and the international system (structure). Since the late 1980s, international political events, especially in the areas of the environment and human rights, have demonstrated the widespread influence of other types of actors. Whether a corresponding expansion of agency has paralleled this multiplication of actors depends on the definitions of agency and structure. Whereas structurationist approaches to the agent-structure debate have been generous in ascribing “knowledgeable behavior” and “transformative capacity” to agents, more recent contributions have pointed out that actors vary in their

ability to “make a difference” because of variable access to human and nonhuman resources.

Several analytical tools to explore agent-structure interactions empirically have been advanced. Wendt (1987, p. 365) has suggested a “structural analysis to theorize the conditions of existence of state agents, and the use of historical analysis to explain the genesis and reproduction of social structures.” Archer favors a sequential dualism embodied in iterative cycles in which action conditions structure, which conditions action (Archer 1985 cited in Carlsnaes 1992). The challenge for mid-range and substantive work on international cooperation lies in navigating the multiplicity of structures at different levels of aggregation, critically assessing the extent to which actors exert agency, and identifying causal mechanisms that reveal the mutual constitution of types of structures and agents over time.

THREE RECENT THEMES IN COOPERATION THEORY: NONSTATE ACTORS, NORMS AND IDEAS, AND EFFECTIVENESS

Our review of cooperation theory and the agent-structure debate provides the building blocks for our assessment of recent developments in international cooperation theory. In the following sections, we review the achievements of research on the themes of NSAs, norms and ideas, and effectiveness, and we offer a critique of each theme through the lens of the agent-structure debate, with a view to strengthening theoretical insights. We conclude by identifying remaining challenges to each research agenda.

Activities and Influence of Nonstate Actors in International Politics

Growing competition with state-centric theories and the proliferation of NSAs in international politics have led scholars to examine the diversity of international actors, including international governmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), transnational social movements, private economic actors, and epistemic communities. To date, they have paid particular attention to the deployment of resources and strategies to influence local, national, regional, and even global negotiations and policy outcomes.

We identify two main shortcomings and a promising trend in this literature. NSA influence on international cooperation is here to stay and represents a shift of agency away from states. Although distinguishable NSA properties are generally outlined, however, definitions rarely include what makes them agents—in other words, how they exhibit reflexivity. Another omission is that, although autonomous agency in terms of influence on policy or norms is often asserted, much of the literature fails to outline how these actions subsequently influence NSAs themselves. Many authors leave the coconstitutive nature of agency and structure underexplored and focus on outcomes at the expense of impact. On the positive side, the literature

is characterized by increasing attention to ideational elements, including norms and knowledge. In light of the agent-structure debate, this shift entails that NSAs' influence will be more readily recognized and acknowledged, which could lead to refined insights on the structural conditions that constrain and enable NSAs, as well as the conditions under which international cooperation flourishes or fails.

THE EMERGENCE OF NONSTATE ACTORS IN IR Growing attention to NSAs followed from criticisms of the state-centric paradigm that dominated IR until the 1970s. Innovations in communications and information technology, increasing overseas travel, and the growing number of international conferences—which allowed individuals and organizations to share resources in order to collectively influence ideas, values, norms, and political orientations—provided scholars with a greater appreciation for the importance of NSAs in international politics (Florini 2000, Keck & Sikkink 1998, Wapner 1995).

Neorealists charged that the abundance of these organizations was a consequence of hegemonic stability and could be reduced analytically to the state system (Waltz 1979). Although NSAs became serious objects of study by the 1980s, some argued that the debate “suffered premature closure” because their effect was evaluated exclusively in terms of influence on state policies (Wapner 1995, p. 318). Although the repercussions of this turn continue to be felt today in the shape of an excessive focus on government action as the primary dependent variable, insights from the more recent scholarship have begun to diversify the arrays of causal directions, including how NSAs influence IGOs (Alger 2002, Brown & Fox 1998, O'Brien et al. 2000), multinational corporations (Sonnenfeld 2000), or “global civil society” (Wapner 2002). The examination of relations between NSAs and elite groups, the media, or academia, however, remains relatively rare.

Studies aimed at legitimating NSAs in IR have focused on who these actors are and what they do. Arguably the most important NSAs in international cooperation are IGOs, including the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as international trade and finance organizations (Conca 2000, Cronin 2002a, de Senarclens 2001, Woods & Narlikar 2001). Although the United Nations' traditional collective security mandate continues to receive considerable attention, scholars have increasingly focused on environmental and social agendas (Conca 1996, Simmons & Oudraat 2001, Weiss & Gordenker 1996). The growth of international NGOs accelerated during the 1990s, and so has the literature that describes them (Arts 1998, Betsill & Corell 2001). Most recently, transnational nongovernmental groups and networks have received considerable attention fueled by their interventions at economic summits. Whereas early studies often focused on characterizing these entities and asserting their influence, a second wave now places them in the larger setting and thereby begins to address issues of structure (Khagram et al. 2002, Risse et al. 1999).

Epistemic communities, defined as groups of scientists with “accepted understandings about cause-and-effect linkages about any set of phenomena considered important by society,” have been widely addressed in international environmental

politics and IR theory more generally (E. Haas 1990; P. Haas 1990, 1992; Wiltshire 2001). Although this approach has shed light on international environmental policy-making processes, it has been criticized for disregarding that the “scientization of policy also means the politicization of science” (Lidskog & Sundqvist 2002). Finally, in contrast to early NSA scholarship in IR, recent work has paid less attention to multinational corporations, even though the globalization of capital and financing has dramatically increased their economic and political reach (DeSombre 2000, Garcia-Johnson 2000, O’Neill 2001). One area in which this research has progressed is the emergence of private global governance regimes (Hall & Biersteker 2002, Falkner 2003).

The growing NSA literature has contributed to a better understanding of international cooperation. First, it has documented the increase in the number of NSAs in international politics. United Nations conferences, for instance, are now routinely paralleled by well-attended NGO forums. This trend has challenged accepted views of state agency, and many NSA scholars have begun reflecting on the erosion of the Westphalian system and the emergence of transnational states and societies (Evans 1997, Spruyt 2002). Second, NSAs are found to be relatively more significant during issue definition and agenda setting, although this varies by type of NSA; NGOs, for instance, also play a growing role in monitoring and implementing international agreements (Florini 2000, Simmons & Oudraat 2001). Through this role, some NSAs are able to influence incentives, beliefs, and preferences of states and other NSAs and hence shape the terms and direction of international cooperation. Finally, the NSA literature displays a growing emphasis on ideational, not material, vectors of influence. This shift is reflected in the phrase “transnational moral entrepreneurs,” which describes transnational NGOs in pursuit of normative change by reframing problems as global or “cosmopolitan,” rather than of sole interest to states (Nadelman 1990 cited in Klotz 2002).

Despite these advances, continued shortcomings of the NSA literature are discernable through the lens provided by the agent-structure debate.

MANY ACTORS AND OUTCOMES, LITTLE AGENCY AND IMPACT? Agency entails a degree of conscious or unconscious choice, the ability to reflect on the situation at hand, and the capacity to use reflexive knowledge to transform situations and to engage in learning as a result. We have seen that all types of actors have the potential to exercise agency, but not all of them do. Many NSA analyses do not address what choices agents face, how their awareness develops, how they transform contexts (structure), and what is learned. This inattention to the differentiated nature of actors and agents has resulted in the seemingly more rapid proliferation of actors than agents and the greater attainment of proximate outcomes than broad impact.

Perhaps because the establishment of IGOs generally reflects the willingness of states to grant limited authority to supranational bodies, the association of agency with IGOs has been least problematic. Although the literature describing these entities and their actions has grown rapidly, however, IGOs have until recently been viewed as a component of structure, as the aggregation of “member

state preferences through strategic interaction within the structure of the I[G]O. . . simply epiphenomena of state interaction” (Barnett & Finnemore 1999). Barnett & Finnemore (1999) challenge this notion by extending Weberian notions of bureaucracy to describe international organizations whose rational-legal authority “gives them power independent of states that created them and channels that power in particular directions.” Similarly, Cronin (2002b) notes that IGOs may act as “socializing agents” in bringing about changes in states that threaten regional stability.

In order to qualify as agents, actors must not only reflect on choices and learn from mistakes but also exert transformative power. In analytical terms, this requires that scholars identify the causal mechanisms and examine how independent and dependent variables are interrelated, a task that figures large on a fruitful research agenda for the NSA literature.

As our discussion of the agent-structure debate emphasizes, the failure to accept the ontological autonomy of structures, which enable and constrain agents, directly leads to the inability to explain preference and identity formation. In the NSA literature, structures are often viewed in narrowly constraining terms. In other words, what the NSA literature seeks to explain, namely the (re)shaping of interests, is analytically precluded. If structures were conceptualized as constraining *and* enabling, concomitant attention to the mutual constitution of NSAs and their environment would permit more fertile ground for discussing the origin of preferences and identities. Beyond noting that NSAs may act as moral entrepreneurs, for instance, research could more easily address why such stances matter, how normative components of NSA strategies (such as shaming) are effective, and why they change over time.

A related and final area of needed inquiry in the NSA literature is the formation of preference and identity. The inability to explain preference and identity formation leads to the portrayal of NSAs (or sets of NSAs) as more unitary than they really are. Increasingly accepted typologies distinguish NSAs on the basis of membership (governmental or nongovernmental) or by substantive or geographic scope. However, there is little discussion on their ethical foundations or why they matter for international cooperation. This homogenization ignores the significant differences that are more subtle than often-cited ethical discrepancies between NGOs and multinational corporations (MNCs) or the World Trade Organization (WTO). Furthermore, it defines the field of NSA scholarship in narrow terms and thereby omits forms of NSAs that fall outside the international projects of environmental protection, social justice, or economic globalization, particularly international networks involved in various types of illegal trade and other crimes (Ford 2003).

The Influence of Norms and Ideas on International Cooperation

EMERGENCE AND DEFINITIONS Throughout the 1990s, scholarly interest in the regulative and constitutive influences of norms in international politics

proliferated. Much of this work was positioned as a critique of the dominant structural realist understanding of international cooperation. This literature argues that ideas and institutionalized norms, and the ways these are constructed and promulgated, are significant forces in world politics (Goldstein & Keohane 1993, Katzenstein 1996, Legro 1995). They socialize state actors. Interest in the normative influences on international relations has grown over the past decade. Keohane (1989), the premier neoliberal institutionalist, acknowledges the value of “reflective approaches” in identifying important contextual influences such as history, culture, and learning that are not well captured in rationalistic approaches (Keohane 1989). Recent analyses also support the contention that one cannot understand international relations and processes such as interest articulation and bargaining without considering the influence of ideas, socialization, and learning.

There is considerable debate as to analysts’ preferred definition of norms. However, Finnemore’s (1996, p. 22) definition, which considers norms to be “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a community of actors,” captures two components common to most conceptions of norms: They are intersubjective and associated with action. Norms serve as models for expected behavior or practice. They “simplify choices of actors with nonidentical preferences facing each other in a world characterized by scarcity” and serve as justifications and models for ways in which specific tasks should be accomplished (Kratochwil 1989, p. 14). In the language of institutionalism, norms separate “appropriate” from “inappropriate” behaviors (March & Olsen 1989). Much of the recent work on norms relies on this “logic of appropriateness” to explain normative influences on actors, arguing that norms function to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and courses of political action (Risse 2002).

Norm-driven forms of international cooperation and individual state action may stem from some level of transnational agreement on the *in*appropriateness of particular practices, including the nineteenth-century slave trade (Nadelmann 1990), colonial rule (Jackson 1993), or South African apartheid (Klotz 2002). Other cooperation arrangements institutionalize policies and/or behaviors deemed appropriate, such as the growing acceptance of the “polluter pays” and “precautionary” principles as organizing frameworks for international and domestic environmental policies (Mol 2002). Finally, many international cooperation arrangements institutionalize lists of appropriate and inappropriate behaviors simultaneously. The Geneva Conventions’ attempt to regulate the treatment of wounded soldiers and noncombatants remains a preeminent example (Finnemore 1996).

Although the roles of norms in engendering and sustaining international cooperation have garnered much attention from IR scholars, ideas too are argued to have significant impact on international cooperation. The concept of “ideas” also remains difficult to define, encompassing such diverse notions as worldviews, cognitive paradigms, theories, norms, principled beliefs, policy programs, and frames (Campbell 2002). Many IR analysts choose to narrow their range of inquiry by addressing particular types of ideas such as “public ideas” (Ringius 2001), “principled ideas” and/or “causal beliefs” (Goldstein & Keohane 1993). In fact, the

distinctions between what some scholars call norms and what others refer to as ideas remain vague (Gelpi 1997).

For Ringius (2001), like many who examine the role of ideas in international politics, publicly accepted ideas (and symbols of them) are said to focus public and elite attention on particular problems. Goldstein & Keohane (1993) argue that ideas may function as “road maps,” “focal points,” and/or “glue” among actors making choices within groups—those who seek cooperative outcomes. Goldstein & Keohane (1993, p. 21) also argue that ideas may become institutionalized, reflecting both the power of particular ideas and “the interests of the powerful.” For example, Krasner (1993) argues that the origins of the nation-state system demonstrate that ideas, such as state sovereignty, that are initially institutionalized because they serve the interests of the powerful may have independent influence over time. Krasner’s approach illustrates that ideas are not formulated or institutionalized in the absence of the power and interests of actors.

TWO WAVES OF NORMATIVE INFLUENCE AND COOPERATION THEORY The “first wave” of scholarly work on the influence of norms in international politics posits particular norms or ideas as independent variables and international cooperation arrangements (regimes, treaties, etc.) as dependent variables. Much of this early work argues that the behavior and content of states are shaped by norms in four ways: through the abilities of ideational factors to influence state behavior at the international system level; by solving coordination problems (Goldstein & Keohane 1993); by providing the discourse for international politics; and by altering incentive structures within which states act (Cortell & Davis 2000). For example, some neoliberal work argues that agreement on norms and ideas can reduce transaction costs (Keohane 1984).

Nevertheless, neoliberal and interpretivist approaches agree that norms can achieve a kind of limited, autonomous influence on actors as they become institutionalized within international organizations and the understandings of participating actors. Interpretive approaches, however, do not limit analysis of normative influences to formalized institutional arrangements. As Klotz (2002, p. 23) argues, “no ‘anti-Apartheid regime’ need exist for racial equality to be a significant norm” in international politics.

In sum, first-wave work on normative influences on international politics—both neoliberal and interpretivist approaches—tended to argue that norms engendered international cooperation by shaping state interests and preferences in ways that gave state actors more shared interests. Norms helped to realize common interests and common gains and established common notions of appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

By the late 1990s, a second wave of norms literature was emerging, which paid more attention to norms’ abilities to affect “state behavior via domestic political processes” (Cortell & Davis 2000, p. 66; Finnemore & Sikkink 1998). In much of this work, norms continue to be treated as independent variables. However, a greater array of dependent and intermediate variables have been incorporated into

this research. Second-wave research seeks to better understand various domestic influences of international norms on state actors, the public, various societal elites, and domestic discourses.

Second-wave literature looks for changes in domestic discourses, national institutions, and state policies. It seeks empirical evidence of the domestic “salience” of particular transnational norms, focusing on processes of state socialization and the acceptance of previously rejected norms (Cronin 2002b, Johnston 2001, Risse-Kappen 1995). Thus, for second-wave research on ideational influences, international cooperation may be treated as either an outcome of normative influence on state-actor behavior or a process by which particular norms are diffused to state and domestic (individual and/or collective) actors. Most such work assumes that iterated interaction might be required if domestic and international actors are to internalize particular norms and ideas. Second-wave literature also assumes, consistent with cognitivist approaches, that iterated international cooperation within international organizations might engender, specify, or strengthen certain norms and ideas (Bernstein 2002). For example, Haas (2002) argues that the most significant impact of the series of United Nations Conferences on issues associated with global environmental and development issues may be the construction and institutionalization of global norms, ideas, and discourses.

AGENCY AND CRITIQUES OF THE NORMS LITERATURE In order to understand the influence of norms and ideas on international cooperation efforts, we need a theory of agency. Ideas must have carriers (Blyth 1997, Hall 1992). We must consider how norms and ideas are transmitted through cooperation and translated into different national contexts. The complexity of identifying agency in international politics partially results from the fact that social institutions, such as policy norms and principles, have causal efficacy because they embody human agency—they are the products of iterated social interaction. As Douglas (1986) argues, human actors do not consciously assess every action and choice they make. Often, their actions unconsciously follow or abide by the prescriptions of norms or habits. In a sense, then, norms often determine action.

The literature on norms and ideas does not treat social institutions as mere constraints on agent choices, as IR’s neoliberal institutionalists often do. Rather, the more structure-oriented approach taken in the norms literature argues that normative institutions often shape and determine choices or actions because they can influence actors’ understanding of their interests (Finnemore 1996) and because humans rely on just such social institutions to “choose” actions (Douglas 1986). Although norms are not agents, because they lack abilities to choose between different courses of action (or to assess and learn from past experience), they do have causal efficacy.

So, who are the agents in normative cooperation politics? Finnemore (1996) focuses on a small set of heroic individuals and organizations who leverage ideational influence and persuade state actors of the appropriateness of particular norms and ideas. In a more diffuse fashion, the transnational advocacy networks literature

locates normatively grounded agency within networked individuals and groups (e.g., Keck & Sikkink 1998). Because norms are collectively shared, their carriers (individuals and organizations) are the focus of this research. IR literature on transnational networks and norms has been greatly influenced by work on the diffusion of human-rights norms (Gutner & VanDeveer 2001, Keck & Sikkink 1998, Risse 2002). These networks are dominated by NGO activists whose efforts are driven by strongly held ideas about morality.

What are future directions for research in norms and ideas in cooperation theory? In many respects, the international cooperation literature on ideational influences embodies the continuing theoretical divisions between “agent-oriented” and “structure-oriented” approaches in political science. One challenge is to try to combine these approaches. For instance, in explaining domestic and international policy outcomes, understanding of the role of transnational norms in interest formation can be augmented by serious attention to actors’ strategic use of norms in pursuit of their interests as they understand them. Another way of thinking about both agents and structures is to configure norms as structure and identify agents in norm building and transmission, and thereby understand the impetus behind structural change. Alternatively, norms and ideas could be depicted as tools that enable agents to accomplish various objectives.

Other challenges involve more careful empirical attention to particular questions. For example, too often the origins or sources of influential norms and ideas remain unexplored and it is unclear how and why old ideas give way to new ones (Campbell 2002). The influence of ideational forces on actor preference formation and identity remains similarly vague, so the methods by which one can observe this influence remain underspecified. Likewise, the relationship of the transnational and/or interstate normative influence on international cooperation under empirical examination to “larger” processes of Westernization, globalization, and/or colonialism and cultural domination remains little explored.

The Effectiveness of International Cooperation

The effectiveness theme is the newest in international cooperation theory. Much of the concern about the influence, or “effectiveness,” of international cooperation arose from the international environmental politics literature, but it is now spilling over into other areas of IR theory (Chayes & Chayes 1998, Downs et al. 1996, Simmons 1998, Zürn 1998). Dominant theories of regime effectiveness are highly consistent with neoliberal institutionalist theory. In these accounts, effectiveness is a function of structural constraints and opportunities and of the strategic choices of the actors involved. Rational actors act within the constraints or opportunities set by the international contractual environment (anarchic international system) and by the institutions they have established. The process of regime implementation and compliance is configured in a functionalist sense: Do they work? What incentives do actors have to comply? How do we apply insights from one regime to another in order to make them work better? Despite this literature’s important

contributions to understanding the conditions under which cooperation is more or less effective, explicit attention to agency and the potential for structural transformation as another possible impact of cooperation is lacking in the mainstream literature; thus, the debate over the impacts of cooperation is limited to questions of functionality.

Even though the body of work on effectiveness has rarely invoked the broader questions yielded by the agent-structure debate directly, two observations are possible. First, many of the independent variables identified in effectiveness theories are highly structural and therefore seen as resistant to change. Agency is certainly implicit but remains restricted to states. Structures are usually defined as material resources only and beyond the reach of most actors. Second, one of the important potential impacts of cooperation is the possibility for social change, or structural transformation, through cooperation. Newer work, taking a constructivist approach to understanding the impacts of cooperation, is beginning to address these questions, for example through examining processes of “state socialization” through cooperation, and the role of norms and ideas. In particular, newer work is starting to move toward a view of structure as more negotiable and less material, thus further opening scholarly potential for identifying the agents involved in such transformation.

THE NEOLIBERAL PERSPECTIVE The first issue facing scholars of regime effectiveness is defining the dependent variable. Many definitions are used in the literature, from adducing whether it leads to any change in a relevant variable, through behavioral and legal changes by signatory states (implementation and/or compliance), to the strongest definition, whereby “successful institutions. . . are those that 1. Change the behavior of states and other actors in the direction intended by the cooperating parties; 2. Solve the environmental problem they are supposed to solve, and 3. Do so in an efficient and equitable manner” (Bernauer 1995, p. 358). Other leading studies define effectiveness, implementation, and/or compliance in different ways, although Young’s (1994, pp. 143–49) sixfold definition remains the most comprehensive. Generally, they distinguish between fulfilling the terms of an agreement through domestic laws and regulations (implementation or compliance), and actually solving the problem (effectiveness) (Victor et al. 1998, p. 1; Weiss & Jacobson 1998). Some scholars use a relatively broad notion of impact (including indirect effects, political effects, etc.) of cooperation, whereas others stick to a more narrow, goal-oriented definition.

Certainly, there are problems with the way different works define their key dependent variables. Inconsistent terminology muddies the water, and several works in the field are vulnerable to charges of circularity (effective institutions beget effective institutions) or triviality. Often the regimes with the highest degree of compliance are the weakest regimes in terms of environmental effects, as they essentially formalize the status quo. Defining impacts in terms of success or failure is also problematic. Other reviews highlight problems of isolating regime effects, as well as methodological problems such as finding adequate data to measure

environmental impacts (Bernauer 1995, Haas et al. 1993, Young 2001). Some of these concerns have generated a sizable literature on methodologies for studying regime effectiveness, in particular to assess the weight of the regime's impacts independent of other exogenous factors that influence outcomes (Helm & Sprinz 1999, Mitchell & Bernauer 1998, Sprinz 2000, Young 2001).

In terms of independent variables, structural obstacles facing effective environmental agreements are fairly consistent across studies. First, the international political context remains unfriendly to lasting, effective behavioral change by states through cooperation. In particular, the concern is the same as with the more general neoliberal institutionalist arguments, that fear of cheating will lead to "lowest common denominator" agreements that essentially reinforce the status quo. Haas et al. (1993) examine how the international contractual environment (along with levels of concern and capacity) may be modified to build more effective international institutions.

Second, many international environmental problems are both pervasive and uncertain in their causes, outcomes, and distributive impacts over time. Some argue that basic characteristics render certain environmental issues more amenable to effective cooperation than others—that ozone layer depletion is simpler than climate change, for example (Downie 1994, Miles et al. 2002). However, the assumption that issue area characteristics determine outcomes or indeed regime design has been challenged by the (soft) constructivist literature on issue framing, which argues that problems are framed politically by concerned actors in ways that facilitate effective cooperation (GEA 1997, Social Learning Group 2001).

Third, national politics and institutions matter because international agreements have to pass through domestic legislative processes in order to be implemented. Resultant laws must be strong enough to change the behavior of domestic actors, both private and public, in order to be effective. There is a growing literature on the ways that domestic institutions and practices constrain and/or enable such processes (DeSombre 2000, O'Neill 2000, Puchala 1975, Schreurs & Economy 1997, Weiss & Jacobson 1998). Fewer arguments claim that international environmental cooperation can transform national politics. Exceptions include VanDeveer (2002) and Weinthal (2002), who demonstrate how engagement in international cooperation helped socialize new regimes in the former Soviet Republics and Eastern Bloc, at home and abroad. Finally, many states and public-sector actors lack the capacity, in terms of resources, personnel, and expertise, to meet treaty obligations (VanDeveer & Dabelko 2001). Several works point out the importance of aid and transnationally driven restructuring processes in understanding and improving capacity and thus effectiveness (Grindle 1997, Sagar 2000, Carmin & VanDeveer 2004). Capacity is occasionally used as an international-level variable (Miles et al. 2002). However, the concept is primarily applied to developing countries, despite the potential for fruitful adaptation to wealthier nations, where "antigovernment" regulatory environments have often hampered the ability of officials, or indeed any actors, to effect change in environmental practices.

Studies of regime design are common in this field, in part because such characteristics are easily identified and in part because they are among the most malleable (or policy-relevant) of the variables available to study (Mitchell 1994, Susskind 1994, Weiss & Jacobson 1998). These works focus on a range of regime-design characteristics, looking at issues of incentive-based versus punishment-based mechanisms, the degree of transparency involved ("sunshine" measures), perceptions of the agreement's equity, monitoring and reporting requirements, and the strengths and weaknesses of the convention-protocol method of bargaining. Victor et al. (1998, p. 16) examine "systems for implementation review" within agreements: institutions through which the parties share information, compare activities, review performance, handle noncompliance, and adjust commitments (see also GEA 1997).

INCORPORATING THE AGENT-STRUCTURE DEBATE Of the three themes reviewed here, the effectiveness literature appears to be the least affected by the agent-structure debate. The effectiveness work cited above incorporates notions of structure in terms of its focus on contextual variables and constraints, material capacities, and institutions. In these examples, agency is largely restricted to states as the actors with power to regulate, and therefore change, the behavior of nonstate actors (NSAs) at the international and domestic levels. Discussion of agency is limited to strategic action within the constraints imposed by the international system, which are not seen as negotiable. The international order remains anarchic, domestic institutions and preferences are already shaped, and states act strategically within these parameters. Much of the effectiveness literature focuses on "malleable" (or "choice") variables, deriving policy prescriptions that can enhance compliance within existing "fixed" constraints. The potential for structural transformation, and the concomitant empowering of new agents (and new identities for existing agents) and levels of agency via the process of cooperation, are overlooked in all but a handful of works.

Instead, following Downs's (2000) discussion of a constructivist approach to effectiveness, we argue that it is possible to view cooperation as a process that supports the major components of agency: reflexivity, transformative capacity, and learning. For some authors, cooperative agreements are vehicles for transmitting norms and policy ideas from government to government or from the international to the domestic level (Conca & Dabelko 2002, Cortell & Davis 2000). Ecological modernization theory addresses how new ideas about environmental regulation have been transmitted across national borders (Mol 2002, Mol & Sonnenfeld 2000). By helping to institutionalize shared norms or innovative ideas, such processes, which may also operate "below" the regime level (e.g., Wapner 1996), enhance and reinforce regime effectiveness, though possibly in indirect and unintended ways (Risse 2000). Another strength of the normative literature (as earlier sections point out) is that it recognizes the agency of NSAs as carriers and transmitters of new norms and ideas. NSAs also empower previously marginalized actors, including smaller states, by pushing their views to the fore.

The literature on learning (Princen & Finger 1994, Social Learning Group 2001) takes a broad view of how actors learn through cooperation, and the literature on assessment demonstrates elements of reflexivity (GEA 1997, Victor et al. 1998). In fact, most international regimes contain mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and amendment. In that sense, one can understand effectiveness as a learning process, rather than an end result, concurrent with the definition of cooperation adopted in this essay. Pushing this notion further, some of this literature is beginning to address how norms and ideas may start to change or transform states' domestic capabilities and institutions, their interests/preferences, or their role in the international system, thus addressing the notion of transformative capacity.

In sum, although existing work on the effectiveness of cooperation in the neoliberal institutionalist tradition makes good progress at a policy level, it remains unambitious in examining the extent to which existing structural constraints may be transformed through cooperation. It also does not address issues of agency explicitly, although elements can be traced implicitly throughout the literature. The field's tendency to get caught up in methodological debates, for instance, over how to measure effectiveness, has had the unintended effect of narrowing the set of indicators scholars look for. Thus, we would suggest that fruitful directions of research lie in adopting a broader definition of "impact" that takes into account the role of, and change in or empowerment of, structures and agents. In turn, this definition would enable us to examine the proposition that engaging in iterated cooperation has the potential to generate actual social change in the international system and among its components.

We suggest three areas of research, more or less overlooked in the literature to date, that would help bring impact and agent-structure questions together. First, the literature needs to take problem-framing more seriously. Instead of offering typologies for types of problems (as though these are set parameters), it should look at how problems are framed (for example, in techno-managerial terms versus moral or ethical terms) and, especially, who does the framing, at all stages of the policy process. Second, it is important to take into account a temporal dimension: Does it matter for effectiveness that agents' beliefs, views, or expertise may change over time? How does iterative cooperation engender such change, and how does it take it into account? Finally, to expand on something we hint at above, how might the effectiveness literature compare outcomes such as deeper cognitive or structural change to the outcome of state policy change? Few international agreements seek to engender deep cognitive change in the state system. Yet, some do point in this direction, such as the official declarations from the three "Earth Summits." Would these sorts of agreements be subject to the same (narrow) standards for effectiveness as, say, the Kyoto Protocol? Yet, even the Kyoto Protocol has engendered transnational discussions among societal groups about issues such as global equity, which in turn push policy debates (Athanasidou & Baer 2002). There is a need for work that translates these effects into impact on the international system.

CONCLUSIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Recent scholarly work on NSAs, norms and ideas, and regime effectiveness has pushed forward the frontiers of international cooperation theory and has significantly advanced our understanding of the importance and durability of global governance. For example, work on NSAs has demonstrated their emergence and importance; although nation-states have not abdicated their role at the center of international politics, they are both challenged and complemented on many fronts by NSAs. New work that examines spheres of nonstate activity (for example, work on transnational networks and epistemic communities) demonstrates how seriously they are now being taken in academic research. The recent literature on norms and ideas has challenged the conventional analysis that material power is the only variable relevant to state action, interests, and preferences, and has generated insights on how norms and ideas emerge, change, and spread within international institutional contexts. The increasing emphasis on norms and ideas has progressed hand in hand with the growing importance of NSAs, as the latter have often been able to exert leverage in the normative realm. Finally, the effectiveness literature has addressed the question IR theorists ignored for too long: Do cooperative agreements actually work, and how can we know this?

In addition to assessing this literature, this article has addressed two other themes. First, we argue for a reconceptualization of the notion of cooperation based on recent theoretical insights. In our view, cooperation is not simply a single act by states (e.g., the signing of a treaty), but rather an ongoing, iterative process characterized by widespread participation, ongoing assessment and experimentation, and a process (or conduit) that may drive broader transformation of the international system. This reconceptualization captures more of the empirical realities of global governance mechanisms and processes as they have matured over the past few decades. Recent examples in the cooperation literature are implicitly starting to suggest this reconceptualization but have made little headway in making this explicit.

Second, we address some of the weaknesses in the existing literature by applying insights from the agent-structure debate. We hope to use them to develop mid-range applications of important aspects of this heretofore largely metatheoretical debate. Because of the difficulty in operationalizing agent-structure co-constitution for empirical research, there remain few published attempts to do so. At first glance, this might suggest little impact of the agent-structure debate on empirical research and theorizing within IR cooperation. However, careful examination of three of the most active thematic areas of IR cooperation suggests a number of possibilities, as well as glimpses of emerging scholarship. These include, first, a very clear shift toward interest in the ramifications of iterated and durable cooperation regimes over time, and second, interest in the influence of NSAs and norms on preference formation and, perhaps, changes in actor identity over time. Certainly, recent empirical work on NSAs and the influence of norms and ideas demonstrates renewed

interest in socialization, whereby researchers seek to assess the degree to which particular beliefs or norms for appropriate behavior become internalized in states, international actors, and/or various domestic or transnational actors and groups.

The importance of incorporating insights from the agent-structure debate can be illustrated with specific findings from the sections above. To extend the agent-structure metaphor, cooperation theorists are (knowingly or not) agents who are enabled and constrained by the structure provided by social theorists—in the enactment of social theory (structure), cooperation scholars (agents) remold structure over time, generating modifications in social theory that in turn create new possibilities for cooperation theorists.

Although the NSA literature identifies many different actors, it does not yet explicitly examine how or whether these actors actually exercise learning, transformative capacity, reflexivity, or other components of agency. Yet, theoretical reflection on this could generate important insights about the role of these NSAs in international politics, the emergence of their preferences and identities from structural changes they themselves influence, and the extent to which agency has shifted away from states-as-agents, or diffused more widely. For instance, analyses of NGO influence on environmental negotiations combined with studies of regime effectiveness increasingly demonstrate the nature and contours of influence, as well as the impact that resulting structural changes can have on future actors, preferences, and outcomes. The NSA literature and practitioners often assert that international politics (or the world) can be remade by NSAs and a kind of transnational civil society. Greater attention to agent-structure interaction and the transformative capacity of various agents (as well as the limits thereof) might shed light on such claims.

The norms literature needs specifications of agency and structure in order to clarify the direction of processes of social change and institutionalization of new normative structures, as well as the ways in which norms and ideas empower particular agents over others. Also, now that this work has established that norms and ideas can influence actors' behavior and views, greater attention to specifying the limits and conditions under which such influence operates is very much needed.

The effectiveness literature is the least affected by the agent-structure debate. Yet, as our analysis has demonstrated, structural constraints and opportunities are right at the center of this literature. For example, agent-structure interaction, even after agents choose to create particular institutional arrangements, remains largely unexplored. However, recent work, in a more constructivist vein, is beginning to view structures as more negotiable than depicted in the dominant neoliberal institutionalist approach. Work on learning and regime assessment is starting to address how agency is exercised through ongoing processes of regime strengthening and evaluation. In turn, this may enable researchers to move beyond a functional definition of "effectiveness," toward an understanding of its wider impacts in terms of social change or transformation.

What new directions for research does this integration of two formerly separate debates in IR theory open up? First of all, we argue that it paves the way for a new

wave of cooperation theory (also following Conca 2004), which focuses on the decentralized, interactive, adaptive, and iterative process outlined above. Second, regarding the agent-structure debate, processes of cooperation provide a way in to study how agents and structures mutually constitute each other over time. The mainstream literature addresses one-time influences of one on the other, but less frequently addresses how they coevolve. Third, we identify two general hypotheses derived from the research reviewed above that could drive an ongoing research agenda: the agency diffusion hypothesis and the transformational cooperation hypothesis.

- The agency diffusion hypothesis argues that agency is shifting (i.e., diffusing) away from the state in international politics: NSAs are increasingly acquiring the ability to influence and transform international politics. This shift is not merely a result of a relative change in who shapes outcomes of international politics. It also responds to the changing conceptualization of international politics more broadly, to include important normative, in addition to material, dimensions. These changes in who acts and how international politics is conceptualized empower actors who traditionally have not been considered influential but who now wield normative/ideational power. In other words, rather than playing by the rules of a materialist-dominated politics, they can exercise influence by reshaping the normative bases of politics.
- The transformation cooperation hypothesis argues that, through cooperation, domestic and international agents and structures may change in fundamental ways. For instance, cooperation processes can now be seen to have more than linear impacts on problems facing states. By examining the process of implementing and reviewing cooperative agreements, it is possible to see transformative impacts on domestic and international political structures, as well as the empowerment of agents within the system.

Naturally, this sort of work is not without challenges, whether one seeks to demonstrate the impact of agents on structures or on each other, whether one seeks to explore the influence of structure on agents' behaviors (or on agency itself), or whether one seeks to examine agent-structure interaction. All of these have profound implications for research design. Arguments in social theory urge greater attention to process tracing and to counterfactual and historical analysis in the study of cooperation (Archer 1985). Careful attention to how and when different actors exert influence and how different agents are empowered within the international system through the process of cooperation over time is one important requirement. A second is tracing how structural changes—both domestic and international—are engendered through cooperation, especially through implementation and revision of cooperative agreements, and related norms. By integrating social theory and cooperation theory in this way, the study of international cooperation will be able to generate more fundamental (and exciting) insights into a more contemporary IR.

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STATES AS LABORATORIES: A Reprise

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■ **Abstract** As laboratories, states are faced with a new agenda of social experimentation. This article first considers state elections and parties, including state realignment, party endorsements and primary elections, uncontested seats, and campaign finance. A second topic is the governorship, including governors' careers, changes in power, party leadership, and legislative programs and tactics used in negotiating with legislators. A third section considers the state legislatures, including term limits, professionalism, leadership, committees, roll-call voting, and representation. Another subject closely related to all aspects is the variety and organization of interest groups, their power, and whom they represent. The conclusion is that the states as laboratories are now equipped to handle the social experimentation that devolution has handed down to them.

THE STATES AS LABORATORIES

What We Mean by “States as Laboratories”

In 1932, Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis coined the famous phrase “laboratories of democracy” to refer to the states because he viewed them as sources of experimentation, with new solutions to social and economic questions. At that time, the states were responding to the birth of our industrial economy. Much of the New Deal social agenda was based on successful state programs. Now the states are faced with another agenda of social experimentation as the nation has left the industrial era behind and unemployment accompanies depressed manufacturing regions, a poorly trained work force, and lack of health care and housing (Osborne 1988).

Political Scientists and the Study of State Politics

In recent years, political scientists have been doing more research on various aspects of state politics. The 50 states offer much greater opportunity for comparative research than is found in Congress. In 2001, the *State Politics & Policy Quarterly* (SPPQ) began publication as an official journal of the state-politics section of the

American Political Science Association. This provided a new outlet for research on state politics and policy. The *SPPQ* has begun sponsoring conferences that have attracted scholars doing research in these areas.

Our study of the U.S. states is broken into several components that reflect recent research. The first section, “State Elections and Parties,” includes state realignment, incumbent advantages, endorsements and primary elections, uncontested races, and campaign finance. “The Governor” is a second major section, which includes governors’ careers, changes in gubernatorial power, leadership of public opinion, legislative programs, and tactics used in negotiating with legislators. A third major section, “The State Legislature,” discusses term limits, professionalism, legislative leadership, committee systems, multimember districts, roll-call voting, and representation. Another topic closely related to all three of these subjects is interest groups—their organization, their power, and whom they represent.

STATE ELECTIONS AND PARTIES

Realignment and the Changing South

V.O. Key, Jr. described the sectional politics of the South, which grew out of the loyalties and antagonisms generated by the Civil War and persisted largely because of regional economic differences. As long as sectional politics persisted, new partisan alignments based on class or urban-rural differences failed to develop. Moreover, each of the national parties was dominated by the political leadership located in the section of the country where that party held power (Key 1949).

The most important trend in state elections since the early 1960s has been the growth in the proportion of seats and governorships held by Republicans. The Republican Party has been contesting more seats and targeting more skillfully the seats where it has a realistic chance of winning or at least running a competitive race. Initially, the growth of Republican strength in the South was a top-down development. Republican presidential candidates began to carry more southern states. Then Republicans began to elect members of both houses of Congress and to elect governors in some states. The governorship, the most important state office, was a major priority for the emerging party. From the 1960s through 2002, the Republican Party made great progress in the 11 southern states. Republicans had a head start in the border states because of presidential campaigns. But in the 1980s and 1990s, Republicans held the governorship more than half the time in other southern states. In the period beginning with the election of 1994 and ending with the election of 2002, Republicans controlled the governorship at least once in almost every southern state.

Electing Republicans to state legislatures has been a much longer, slower process, particularly well documented by Aldrich (2000). Aldrich identified two prerequisites for the development of strong Republican competition for legislative seats. Ambitious politicians (some of whom had already held offices as Democrats) had to run for seats in the legislature; and strong state Republican Parties had to

develop, to provide tangible support to Republican candidates. Both of these trends occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, first in border states such as North Carolina and Virginia and later in the deep South, in states such as Alabama and Georgia.

Before these trends developed, neither the Republicans nor the Democrats were well organized. The Republicans had too little voter support in most southern states; the Democrats did not need a strong organization, and most of their candidates ran on their own. Once the Republicans became well organized from the 1970s through the 1990s, the Democrats realized that they had to build strong organizations as well. Based on his research, Aldrich (2000) concluded that “the South has emerged as having quite possibly the most strongly organized parties on the average in the nation” (p. 655). This was particularly true in the area of fund-raising.

Primary Elections and Pre-Primary Endorsements

Key (1964) provided some historical perspective on the nominating process: “Throughout the history of American nominating practices runs a persistent attempt to make feasible popular participation in nominations and thereby to limit or destroy the power of party organizations” (p. 371). Political parties have an obvious interest in nominating the strongest possible candidates, the ones who have the best chance of winning the general election. It is not necessarily true that a plurality of voters who participate in a direct primary will choose the candidate most likely to win the general election. The voters might, for example, choose a candidate whose viewpoint or record makes him or her particularly unattractive to independent voters or voters in the other party.

Endorsements for Governor

The governor is at the top of the power structure of the state. A governor is at once the head of the party and head of the government. The job is sought because of the recognition it brings to the holder. Voters are more likely to recognize their governor than either of their state’s U.S. senators. Competition for the office is keen and occurs every four years in all but two states. To obtain the governorship, a candidate must campaign for both the party’s nomination and the electorate’s approval. In 36 states, the elections for governor are held in nonpresidential election years; in 11 states, they coincide with presidential elections. Vermont and New Hampshire have two-year terms and elect in both presidential and nonpresidential years. Five states (Kentucky, Mississippi, Virginia, Louisiana, and New Jersey) elect governors in odd-numbered years.

About a third of the state parties use pre-primary endorsing conventions or meetings to identify the strongest gubernatorial candidate and to nominate that candidate. In some states, an endorsing system is written into state law; in others, it is provided for in party rules. At the present time, state law provides for endorsements in Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, North Dakota, Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico. Endorsements are made under party rules by both parties in Massachusetts and Minnesota, by the California Democrats (for some offices), and by

the Delaware Republicans. In a few states, party leaders or organizations usually meet behind closed doors. These include Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and the Louisiana Republican party. Both parties in Virginia have, from time to time, held conventions or primaries in accordance with state law.

Gubernatorial endorsements are made by party conventions that meet several months before the primary election. Some delegates are appointed by local party organizations, and others are elected at local caucuses, which are attended by voters who are interested and politically active enough to show up. We would expect them, as party loyalists, to recognize the importance of nominating the candidate with the best chance of winning the primary if there is a contest, and with the best chance of being elected. On the other hand, delegates are likely to hold strong views on issues. There is extensive evidence that Democratic delegates to both state and national conventions are likely to be more liberal than the average voter who identifies as a Democrat. A similar pattern would apply to Republican activists (Erikson et al. 1993, Miller 1988, Miller & Jennings 1986). For the endorsement to be effective, the gubernatorial endorsee must win the primary nomination either because that person has no primary opposition or because the endorsee is able to defeat anyone else who runs in the primary.

If an incumbent governor is running for reelection, the governor is almost always endorsed by the convention. Jewell & Morehouse have studied the success of all endorsees in gubernatorial primaries over the period from 1960 through 1998. The most significant finding is that when there was a contested primary, the endorsee won more than 80% of the time in the 1960–1980 period and only half the time in the 1982–1998 period. The present success of endorsees, overall, in both contested and uncontested primaries, is 74% (Jewell & Morehouse 2001).

Primary Elections for State Legislatures

As long as the Democratic Party dominated southern politics, there was little or no competition in Republican primaries. Republican leaders had great difficulty finding any viable candidate to run for the state legislature, to say nothing of two or three candidates.

Generally speaking, more candidates are likely to enter a primary if their chances of being nominated are greater and their chances of winning the general election are greater. Hogan (2003), in a study of primaries in 25 states, finds that a potential candidate is less likely to enter if there is an incumbent running in that primary or in the primary of the other party. As we would expect, there are likely to be more candidates in the primary of the party that is strongest, at least if that party does not have an incumbent running. Hogan finds that in states with more professional legislators, more candidates are likely to run, at least in the absence of an incumbent running. He makes the interesting point that potential candidates often have to make the decision about entering the race before they know who their opponents will be. Another important finding is that only about one fifth of the primaries have two or more candidates running, and rarely are there more than two contestants in a primary.

Uncontested Seats in State Legislative Elections

If many primary races are uncontested, it should not be very surprising that many state legislative races are uncontested. In five elections from 1988 to 1996, more than one third of the legislative seats were uncontested. Squire (2000) has examined variations among the states and other differences for the legislative elections from 1992 to 1996. Squire finds that more seats are likely to be contested when a seat's value to a potential candidate is greater. This means that there are more contested races in more professional legislatures and in those where the salary is greater. Where there is strong two-party competition, there are more contested races. Potential candidates are more likely to run where they have a better chance of winning. Thus "competition begets competition," in Squire's words.

The Gubernatorial Campaign Finance Data Project

As political scientists pay increasing attention to all aspects of state campaign finance, it becomes increasingly important to collect, and make available, accurate data on candidate spending and elections, as well as data on campaign finance laws. This information for the 1977–2001 period has been collected and disseminated by Jensen & Beyle (2003). They have described the data set and also the problems of collecting and compiling it, given the fact that the states have different legal requirements for reporting campaign finance data and different methods for organizing the data. They also have compiled a valuable Campaign Finance Law Database (Jensen & Beyle 2003).

Electing Governors in 2002

The Jensen & Beyle data can be used to indicate which variables are most important in explaining the results of gubernatorial elections. A recent study used their data to measure the impact of incumbency, the amount of money spent, and the primary election percentage for each gubernatorial candidate on the general election results.

We know that in gubernatorial elections the incumbent wins 80% of the time. Incumbent governors have a big money advantage. They have already learned how to raise money and have built a large group of proven fundraisers. Also, most contributors prefer to fund the probable winner, and most believe this will be the governor.

The second variable is the amount of campaign funds spent by each candidate (controlled by size of voting electorate). It is obvious that funding has a very important impact on the outcome of elections to major offices such as the governorship if there is a large disparity between the two candidates.

The third variable is the percentage each candidate won in his or her primary election. A candidate who faced little or no opposition in the primary would usually have more money left to spend in the general election and would be able to demonstrate to party activists that he or she is a strong candidate. If a candidate won the primary by only a narrow margin, this might be a sign of deep division

in the party. We might expect that a candidate who wins the primary by a narrow margin would have trouble winning the general election, but studies do not show that this is consistently the case (Carlson 1989, Kenney 1988, Kenney & Rice 1984).

One factor to consider is whether both party primaries appear to be divisive (Kenney & Rice 1987). Other aspects of a primary may be damaging to the winner. If a party is sharply split into factions, supporters of the losing candidate may not vote at all in the general election or may vote for the opposing candidate. A party primary can be divisive if the campaign is a bitter one with leading candidates making sharp attacks on one another. Even if we recognize that a party has factional conflicts or disputes, it is difficult to measure the intensity of these. The results obtained by a correlation and regression analysis showed that Republican incumbency explained more electoral success in the 2002 gubernatorial election than any other variable [there was a high positive correlation between Republican incumbency and percent of Republican primary vote ($r = 0.513$)]. Republican money spent per voter is also significant in explaining the magnitude of the vote. In general, the observation that the Republicans were better organized and wealthier than the Democrats in 2002 is shown in this study (Jewell & Morehouse 2003). However, we have explained only 40% of the variance; we must consider other factors that have a bearing on state elections.

Campaign Finance Regulation

States have the primary responsibility for establishing the rules and regulations, including campaign finance regulations, that govern most elections in the United States. The rules under which state candidates and state parties operate are sovereign with respect to what they may raise and spend. The national committees may not give money to a state party unless it conforms to the rules in that state (Federal Election Commission 2000). Likewise, federal rules are sovereign with respect to federal candidates. State citizens, groups, and parties may not support their congressional candidates with state money unless it is raised according to federal rules. Areas of overlap are the state party's voter-contact expenses to benefit the whole ticket, which are paid out of both federal and nonfederal (or state) accounts according to a formula set by the Federal Election Commission before each election (Morehouse & Jewell 2003b).

State campaign finance reform is generally analyzed in terms of contribution limits, spending limits, and public funding. Thirty-six states now have limits on individual contributions to gubernatorial campaigns. By 1998, 43 states had imposed limits on corporate contributions; 42 and 37 states had imposed limits on contributions by unions and PACs, respectively. Twenty-two states actually ban corporate contributions to gubernatorial campaigns, and 13 ban labor-union contributions (Gross & Goidel 2003).

Spending limits and public financing of elections have usually been linked since the Supreme Court decision in 1976 (*Buckley v. Valeo*) which ruled that spending

is a form of free speech. Attempts to limit spending violate the First Amendment. Thus, spending limits must be voluntary, but candidates who abide by spending limits may receive public subsidies to encourage their acceptance of the limits. (It is interesting that state parties are not subject to the Supreme Court ruling and their spending is regulated in 22 states.) As of 1998, 14 states had some type of public financing provision for gubernatorial candidates, and in 13 of those, expenditure limits were a condition for receiving funds (Gross & Goidel 2003). It is difficult to determine what kind of regulations are most effective, and not all of the laws have the same goals. One study (Gross & Goidel 2003) concluded that campaign finance laws can affect candidate campaign spending, under certain conditions. A combination of candidate-based public financing and limits on spending is the most effective way to limit the level of spending. This has a greater effect on spending than limitations on contributions to candidates.

One study (Pippin et al. 2002) has shown that states that use the popular initiative are more likely to pass legislation tightening limitations on contributions to political candidates. But most of these laws passed by the initiative process were overturned by the courts. In one case where an initiative in California limited most contributions to state legislative candidates to \$250, a court imposed an injunction on the grounds that the limit was too low to permit candidates to run effective campaigns.

Are State Elections Autonomous?

One school of thought considers gubernatorial elections as national referenda in which voters express their approval or disapproval of the sitting president. This school argues that, if the voters are satisfied with the president's economic policies, candidates of the president's party (incumbents as well as challengers) will benefit from his success, and if voters are not satisfied, gubernatorial candidates of the president's party will lose (Simon et al. 1991). On the other hand, there is considerable evidence that state elections are based on voters' evaluations of the governor's economic performance and are not national referenda based on approval or disapproval of the sitting president. Since incumbent governors are reelected 80% of the time, the evaluations are generally independent of the president and are positive. Research that tests these hypotheses shows that voters do indeed hold governors responsible for the health of their state's economy regardless of fluctuation in presidential approval (Atkeson & Partin 1995, Partin 1995, Tomkins 1988). In open races without incumbents, candidates are not held responsible for past events.

If voters consider gubernatorial responsibility for the economy, on what basis do they judge their governor? According to the taxpayer retribution hypothesis, voters punish governors who implement new taxes. Voters are especially sensitive to the most visible taxes, such as the personal income and sales taxes levied in the American states. A recent study that used exit-poll data from tens of thousands of respondents across 116 gubernatorial elections suggests that incumbents and the

candidates from the incumbents' party do suffer from electoral retribution if the sales tax is raised. The same cannot be said for the income tax (Stults & Winters 2002). What is the strategy for governors who must raise taxes in order to deal with pressing program needs or to cope with a sluggish economy? In general, governors know that they can expect a "two percent hit" at the electoral margins with new taxes and still win (Kone & Winters 1993).

Parties remain influential in determining the vote preferences for governor (Partin 1998). Parties in most states are closely competitive, and traditional party identification can account for voting outcomes when the state economy is stable. When tax increases or unemployment become important in a race, they may have a greater effect on the outcome. Voters have yet another capability. They can discriminate between parties responsible for policy making in a divided government and reward or punish a political party when its responsibility for government performance is unified (Leyden & Borrelli 1995).

Gubernatorial candidates evaluate the electorate and shape the issues that they believe will bring responses from groups of voters. Carsey (2000) argues that the salience of issues among voters is volatile and that candidates may be able to engineer a short-term influence on voting behavior if they can alter the salience of particular dimensions during the election process. Voters respond to the choices presented to them and the candidates' campaigns help to define the nature of those choices. On the other hand, another study gives the voters more credit for defining the salience of issues in a campaign. Lacy & Paolino (2003) find that voters decide which candidates to support in an election based on policies they expect the candidates to implement if elected, and not the platforms on which they campaign. This requires a knowledge of the constitutional relationship between the executive and legislative branches and the executive's influence in policy making.

THE GOVERNOR

A governor is at once the head of the party and the head of government. His or her success as a party leader is vital to success as a governor who can convince legislators and administrators to cooperate. Because of the importance of a governor and his or her policies to the health and welfare of the people of each state, the office is eagerly sought and competition is keen. Governors must deliver on their promises to the people or they have little chance for reelection and hence for political advancement.

To deliver on their promises, governors must deal in the politics of personalities and issues. They must put together coalitions large enough to ensure themselves the nominations of their parties. A successful candidate's coalition must convince other party leaders, office seekers, and legislators that he or she is the strongest candidate and that their futures lie in supporting his or her coalition. Office seekers and legislators also have ambition for reelection or advancement.

The previous section documented the tasks of the electoral party as it recruited, nominated, and elected governors. In some states, the party united behind a

candidate in the nominating process. Incumbent governors are usually nominated without opposition. Competitive state parties try to minimize conflict for the purpose of entering the election with a strong electoral organization ready to do battle against the opposition party.

The struggle for the nomination carries over into the governing process and affects the governor's ability to govern effectively. It takes coalitions to pass programs. Without coalitions, groups with money and influence can block legislation intended to ease the burden on those who suffer from economic and social dislocation. Those who suffer are those who usually suffer—the sick, the poor, the jobless, the elderly.

This section first discusses the career patterns that prepare gubernatorial candidates for the state's highest office and discusses their ambitions for advancement to national leadership. Second, with respect to the governor's role as head of the governing party, what resources does he or she command to help move those in government to agree with program promises made during the campaign? What are the institutional and political restrictions on the governor's ability to see the program through the state legislature? Third, what relationship is there between the coalitions formed during the election process and the coalitions that support the election winners in their role as governor? What are the political powers of strong and weak governors?

The Gubernatorial Career

The state legislature provides initial experience for nearly half of those following the four major routes to the governorship (Beyle 1999). In fact, 19% of all governors were elected directly from the state legislature between 1970 and 1994. Two additional routes provided more governors than ever before in the twentieth century: holding a statewide elective office—lieutenant governor, secretary of state, state treasurer, state attorney general, or state auditor—launched another 29% into the governor's mansion; and 16% of elected governors came from a congressional career. Only law enforcement has gone down significantly (11%, down from a century average of 18%) as a career route to the governorship (Beyle 1999).

In the most recent period, 1998–2002, the 46 new governors were drawn from the following careers: statewide elective (33%), Congress (20%), state legislative (15%), business (15%), and big city mayors (13%), plus one State Supreme Court Justice and a former U.S. Attorney (Beyle 2003). Apparently, statewide elective offices are providing the major career route for governors and more governors are coming from Congress. Why do more members of Congress want to return home to run for governor? Congress has been returning power to the states, and governors now have the authority to manage high-profile issues such as welfare reform and expanded health insurance for children in low-income families. The gubernatorial election of 1998 put two “outsider” businessmen named George and Jeb Bush into the governorships of Texas and Florida. The fact that 15% of new governors had been businessmen before winning the governorship may attest to the increasing role of money that buys political exposure.

Retirement or National Leadership?

For many governors, the lure of national leadership can overcome the discouraging fact that few will achieve it. Over 60% of governors hold no further office after retiring or being retired from the governorship. Most of them serve two terms, or eight years in the statehouse. The governorship is a stepping stone to what Schlesinger (1966) called “the presidential office complex.” This includes not only the presidency itself but also those offices that the president can influence or appoint. The vice presidency, the Supreme Court, and the Cabinet all draw on state governors. Generally speaking, large states such as New York, California, and Texas are more likely to produce presidential candidates because of the continuous media exposure of their governors and the money-raising potential they offer. Four of the last five presidents have been former governors, and two of them, Jimmy Carter of Georgia (D, 1971–1975) and Bill Clinton of Arkansas (D, 1979–1981, 1983–1993) were not from the three biggest states. Governors Ronald Reagan of California (R, 1967–1975) and George W. Bush of Texas (R, 1995–2001) followed the big-state tradition.

Governors also covet Senate seats. Traditionally, one fourth of the Senate is composed of former governors. The state constituency for governor and senator is the same, so a governor who runs for the Senate is already well known and has a campaign organization ready to go. Although governors know that many are called but few are chosen, they hope that their records may prove them worthy of national leadership.

The Governor in the Federal System

Besides wanting to advance their political careers, governors want to protect their states’ interests in federal policy development and to increase the amount of federal funding flowing into their states. The Hall of the States, down the street from the U.S. Capitol, is the preferred address for at least 35 states to maintain their own Washington offices to lobby for federal funds and the conditions set for them.

There has been significant disagreement between Democratic and Republican governors about devolution of power, particularly with respect to welfare. Republican governors wanted welfare turned over to the states in the form of block grants that gave them discretionary power over spending, whereas most Democratic governors believed the national government should continue welfare as a federal entitlement for everyone who was poor. How is this resolved so the governors can speak with a bipartisan voice? The answer lies in the National Governors’ Association (NGA), the best-known presence in the Hall of the States, with a lobbying, research, and state services staff of 90. An annual midwinter meeting of governors is attended by the president, cabinet officers, and Capitol Hill leaders. The governors forged the welfare reform program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) in 1996, which passed Congress that year. At the summer meeting in Indianapolis in 2003, the governors of 47 states were concerned about budget deficits and the fact that Medicaid costs were driving these deficits deeper.

Fifty governors lined up in a rare show of unity to request that all prescription drugs for the elderly be covered under Medicare, the federal program.

The Governor's Formal Powers

The states vary in the formal powers they give their governors as chief executives. These powers include those granted by the state constitution, by state statute, and by the citizens voting on referenda. The Index of Formal Powers of the Governorship developed by Schlesinger in the 1960s consisted of tenure, appointment, budget, and veto powers (Schlesinger 1965). An additional formal power has been added since then: separately elected executive-branch officials (Beyle 2003). Governors who score high on these powers and also have political leadership have an impact on policy enacted by the legislature.

TENURE All states but New Hampshire and Vermont have four-year terms for governor, and all but Virginia allow their governors to serve more than one term. However, the number of states that have limited their governors to two consecutive terms increased steadily during the 1990s. Term limits have distinct disadvantages. Although governors have traditionally served eight years, they could pick the time to declare whether they would run for another term and hence keep their power intact until their last year in office. Thus, governors in the nine states that have not imposed two-term limitations are potentially more powerful than their colleagues.

SEPARATELY ELECTED EXECUTIVE-BRANCH OFFICIALS The selection by popular vote of such officers as lieutenant governor, attorney general, comptroller, treasurer, auditor, and secretary of state has created a multiheaded leadership of state government consisting of independently elected officials who do not owe policy loyalty to a governor unless they are of the same party or agree with his or her program (Dometrius 2002). Because one third of all gubernatorial candidates come from statewide elective office, governors contend with potential rivals in these offices. Eighteen states have separate elections for governor and lieutenant governor, thus promoting potential rivalries and governing problems. Lieutenant governors preside over the senates in all but one of these 18 states, and this brings the power to break a roll-call tie.

APPOINTIVE POWER Once elected, the governor needs people in the administration who are eager to push for policy adoption and implementation. This means the appointment of trusted personnel to key positions. Actually, governors share the appointment power with boards and commissions that head state agencies and often appoint with the approval of the governor. Governors share the appointive power with both houses or either house of the state legislature, which must approve the appointments. In the majority of states, about half of the heads of agencies are appointed by someone else with the approval of the governor, the legislature, or both.

BUDGETARY POWER The power of the purse is shared with the legislature, of course, but over the years the responsibility of preparing the budget has been given to the governor in 42 states. A governor has full responsibility when there is a central budget office under his or her immediate direction, with a budget officer who is appointed and can be removed by the governor. The legislature has unlimited power to change the budget, and all legislatures have been establishing their own professional budget staffs to reduce their dependence on information provided by governors. If the governorship and one or both houses of the legislature are held by opposite parties, which happens about half the time today, it is incumbent upon both the legislature and the governor to agree on a budget. This is where the governor as a strong party leader can negotiate with the leadership of the opposition in one or both branches of the legislature.

VETO POWER On the other end of the budgetary process is the power to veto items in appropriation bills. Although all governors have the power to veto bills in their entirety, the item veto is a potentially powerful weapon that enables governors to exercise control over the budget. In the past 40 years, the greatest increase among the individual gubernatorial powers was in their veto power as more governors gained an item veto. Forty-two states now allow governors the item veto, and in 37 of these, the governor's veto cannot be overridden without an extraordinary majority (three fifths of the legislators elected or two thirds of those elected or voting). In fact, vetoes are seldom overturned, and research suggests that this may encourage legislatures to act irresponsibly (Abney & Lauth 1985). The use of the item veto is related to partisanship (Wilkins & Young 2002). Where the executive and legislative branches are controlled by the same party, the veto is used much less frequently than in states with divided control (Klarner 2000). Many states allow their legislatures to recall bills from the governor prior to his or her action, creating a negotiating process (Beyle 1999).

The Governor's Coalition

The governor's success as a party leader is vital to success in electoral coalition building as well as legislative coalition building (Morehouse 1998). Surprisingly few political scientists have studied the relationship between the efforts of party leaders and gubernatorial candidates to capture the nomination and their success when in office in passing the party programs. In *Governors and Legislatures: Contending Powers*, Rosenthal (1990) describes executive-legislative jockeying as well as legislative independence from or dominance over the governor, assuming institutional conflict as the title suggests.

The governor works closely with the legislative leaders in his or her party as well as with leaders of the opposition party in the legislature when they are in the majority. When the governor has a majority in a legislature, this party leadership includes the speaker of the house, the presiding officer of the senate, majority leaders, and chairs of committees. These individuals support the governor's program and see that bills within it are guided through the legislature.

Governors in half of the states have minority parties in the legislature, and their strategies are different (Morehouse & Jewell 1992). Opposition leaders are more willing to compromise if the governor is politically strong and has widespread public support (Fording et al. 2002, Gurwitt 1997). On the other hand, a governor whose statewide party is weak or divided and who faces a strong opposition legislature will need to accommodate some of the priorities of the opposition party in order to get legislation passed.

Researchers have discovered that professional legislatures have a positive impact on gubernatorial effectiveness. (The level of professionalism in a legislature generally refers to a legislature's degree of capability and expertise as it engages in the policy-making process.) This suggests that the power relationship between the governor and the legislature is not a zero-sum game but rather a positive-sum cooperation (Dilger et al. 1995, Ferguson 2003).

The Governor's Program

Speaking for the party, the governor is responsible for defining the issues and making the commitments that form the basis of his or her legislative program. How does the governor determine which issues are most important to address? Studies of public desires and policy over time in the states show that policy has responded to public ideology, resulting in a high level of correspondence between the two (Barrilleaux et al. 1997, Dileo 1997, Erikson et al. 1993, Jacoby et al. 1996, Niemi et al. 2002).

The governors of all states go into office with platforms that are the work of the candidates and their parties. A platform reflects enough of the governor's major policy priorities that it can be used as a basis for his or her legislative program. Each year the governor presents a state-of-the-state address to a joint gathering of both legislative houses, which outlines the substance of the program he or she wants passed for the session. Some policies are perennial, some cyclical, and some transitory. Perennial issues concern the delivery of traditional state services such as education, highways, health care, law enforcement, and welfare, which account for nearly 75% of average state expenditures. Much of the state's economic well-being and quality of life is tied to delivery of these services (Dileo & Lech 1997, Herzik 1991). The issues identified in governors' state-of-the-state speeches are translated into their program bills, which are introduced in most states by the governor's party leaders in the house or senate or by legislators whom the governor may specify. The governor's budget message soon follows. Through the power of initiation alone, the governor's influence over the legislature is substantial (Crew & Hill 1995).

Resources at the Governor's Disposal

The success of the governor in getting the program passed will depend on his or her ability as a party leader. All governors have resources, but their skill in using them marks the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful governor (Ferguson 2003). A governor who has built public approval and a good-sized coalition within

his or her party can expect to have a large nucleus of support in the legislative party (Barth & Ferguson 2002). Half of all governors have had legislative experience that helps them garner support for their program. Some additional resources at the disposal of the governor are the following.

PATRONAGE Most governors have a least 100 or so appointments to make to boards and commissions (Bernick & Wiggins 1991). Also, the awarding of contracts in a legislator's district impresses constituents with the legislator's political power and wins the governor legislative support.

MEDIA The governor has guaranteed access to newspapers, radio, and television that the legislator cannot command. The governor has repeated opportunities to speak, to capture the headlines, and to appeal to public sentiment as a way of bringing attention to his or her legislative program.

PROMISE OF CAMPAIGN SUPPORT OR THREAT OF OPPOSITION The support of the governor in an election campaign can be a powerful stimulus to a legislator, particularly in a constituency where the legislator's election is in doubt (Hogan 2001). Hence, the legislator in the governor's party has a personal stake in the governor's success. Legislative leaders have established legislative campaign committees, reasoning that raising funds to help both incumbents and challengers who face close races will help make legislators more likely to cooperate with party leaders and, hence, secure support for governors' programs.

CALLING OF SPECIAL SESSION All governors have the capacity to call the legislature into special session. Special sessions have become a tool for governors to call attention to important aspects of their legislative programs or the immediacy of a financial crisis. The legislators are then in the position of either going along with the governor's program or defying the governor, which can be serious if the electorate is really alarmed.

Conclusion

The governor is the chief policy maker in the American states, and his or her ability to provide political leadership affects the quality and distribution of public resources. In almost every policy area, states now have greater flexibility and greater incentives to test innovative ideas than at any time in the last half of the twentieth century. This section has examined the governor's influence over the political party, both outside and within the legislature. The major theme has been that the coalitions formed by the governor to get the party nomination affect his or her ability to influence the party's legislators (Morehouse 1998). Other formal powers of the governor also affect his or her ability to see the program through the legislature. The overriding consideration is the skill with which the governor makes use of these resources. A strong governor with an electoral coalition can get support for his or her policies.

STATE LEGISLATURES

Growing Professionalism

In recent decades, state legislatures have become more professional. They meet for longer periods of time; they have better staff; and the members have higher salaries. The individual legislators are also more professional. Many of them serve for several terms. Most of them devote considerable time to attending meetings in their districts and providing services for their constituents. As they grow more experienced and politically skillful, they are more likely to seek and win reelection. Some legislators who hope to move up, from the house to the senate or from the legislature to a statewide office, may try to reach a larger constituency.

Political scientists often disagree about the implications of greater professionalism. There is some evidence that, in the more professional legislatures, members have greater incentives to serve the interests of their constituents, or perhaps of a larger constituency (Maestas 2000). Some political scientists point out that the more professional legislators have access to so much funding and other resources that they are almost unbeatable at the polls, and that they may be more responsive to the interest groups that provide funding than to their constituents (Weber 1999). This is also an argument made by some of the supporters of term limits.

The Trend Toward Legislative Term Limits

Political scientists have devoted a great deal of attention to the legislative term limits movement. The movement began in 1990, and by 1995, 17 states had adopted term limits (not including one state where the law was repealed and three states where it was overruled by the courts). In most state chambers, term limits did not take effect until they were adopted by a public referendum, and most states that had the referendum did adopt term limits.

Political scientists were interested in this development because it gave them an opportunity to study the consequences of a major change in the electoral process. One of the most comprehensive studies (Moncrief et al. 2003) compared the turnover of membership in state legislatures with and without term limits. From the 1930s through the 1980s, there was a steady, strong decline in the turnover of membership. During the 1992–2002 period, in non-term-limited states, turnover declined at a more modest rate; but in term-limited states, the decline was reversed. The pattern was not consistent in all the term-limited legislatures because of variations in the length of the term allowed by the limits. In addition, in some states, legislators are permitted to run again for the legislature after they have remained outside for a number of years. There are also differences in the proportion of house members who move to the senate once their term in the house has run out.

As time goes by, and we learn more about the effects of term limits in various states, some of the predictions made in the early years are likely to prove inaccurate. Some supporters of term limits predicted that, if they were adopted, elections would become more competitive. In some cases, however, potential candidates have been

reluctant to challenge a strong incumbent starting his or her last term; they have preferred to wait until the next election. Some persons thought that term limits might reduce the influence of interest groups, but some legislators who are close to being termed out have tried to cultivate an interest group in the hope of getting a position with that organization after their term ends. It is not uncommon for legislators to retire before their term is up because they are on the lookout for other jobs or perhaps for a good opportunity to run for a state or local office.

Legislative Leadership

The job of legislators is growing more difficult, with more groups making increased demands on the legislature while the resources available to the states are declining. Under these conditions, the role of legislative leadership has become more important than in the past.

One of the most serious consequences of term limits is their impact on legislative leaders. Leaders need several years of experience to become really effective. But if a potential leader is limited to three two-year terms, for example, he or she has to choose between having a very short apprenticeship or becoming a lame duck soon after reaching a major leadership position.

Generally speaking, legislative leaders (and particularly the house speaker) have more power than the comparable leaders in Congress. This is particularly obvious in the leader's influence over legislative committees, and it is partly because seniority has less importance in most state legislatures than it does in Congress. One detailed study of the speaker's power in state legislatures (Clucas 2001) emphasizes that legislative leaders act as agents for their followers and try to help the members to attain their goals. When there is close two-party competition in the legislature, rank-and-file members are willing to let the leaders exercise more power in order to pass the legislation that is important to the members of the speaker's party. The most skillful leaders use their skills to maintain cohesion within the party and to keep in close touch with the members. Rosenthal (1998), who has written extensively about legislative leadership, makes similar points about the tools of leadership available to legislative leaders and the importance of their being responsive to the needs of legislators in their caucus. But Rosenthal is pessimistic about the future of leadership power. He believes leadership has been losing power as the members become more individualistic with more diversified perspectives.

Legislative Committee Systems

Between 1965 and 1979, several reforms made legislative committees more effective. In many legislatures the number of committees was reduced, and the committees that remained had more importance. Committees were better staffed and made greater use of hearings (Martorano 2003). The chair of the committee usually exercises considerable power. There are some differences among committee systems, depending on the extent of partisanship in the legislature and on the style of leadership preferred by the majority leaders. Where parties are strong, the

majority leadership may be influential in the decisions made by the more important committees, and sometimes Democratic and Republican members may caucus separately before the committee makes decisions. Where parties are not so strong, decisions in committees are less likely to follow party lines (Rosenthal 1998).

The Analysis of Roll-Call Voting

Since the 1960s, political scientists who study state legislatures have been lacking comprehensive data on roll-call voting that was current or even recent. Such data once enabled congressional scholars to write dozens of articles exploring virtually every aspect of congressional roll call voting. In *Statehouse Democracy*, Wright and colleagues demonstrated a strong relationship between aggregate state opinion and policy liberalism (Erikson et al. 1993). But they lacked the necessary roll-call data to explain fully how the process worked.

Thanks to Wright, roll-call data have now been collected and coded for all 99 state legislative bodies, covering a two-year cycle (1999–2000) (Wright & Winburn 2002, 2003). The roll-call votes of more than 8000 legislators have been collected. Simply collecting this material and converting it into comparable machine-readable data files is an enormous, difficult job. In addition, it was necessary to collect data on the viewpoints of constituents in each district. Ideally, there would be survey data covering each legislative district. In reality, such surveys were not available for all or even most districts. Instead, as a surrogate, data were collected on the 2000 presidential vote in each district because data have shown a very high correlation between public opinion and the vote for president in the district. This made it possible in each district to measure roll-call votes cast by the legislator and compare them with public opinion.

Representation of Groups

There has been a gradual increase in the proportion of women and ethnic minorities in state legislatures, but this varies considerably by state, and these groups still fall short of equitable representation. In 2003, 22% of legislators were women. The lowest percentage of women was found in southern states. The largest percentage of women, averaging almost one third, was found almost entirely in the West (National Conference of State Legislatures 2003). The number of women in top leadership positions in legislatures has also been increasing. In 1999, 38 women held such positions, which was 11% of all leaders. In only 7 states were as many as one fourth of the top leaders women, and these were states with a large percentage of women in the legislature (Center for American Women and Politics 1999).

The proportion of African American legislators increased from barely 2% in 1970 to about 7.5% in 1998 (compared to almost 13% of the population). In recent years, several court decisions have led to the creation of more legislative districts with majorities of blacks, particularly in the South (Bullock 1992). In 1994, only 3% of legislators were Latinos, but the proportion was at least 10% in several southwestern states, and the proportion is growing.

There is reason to believe that there would be more minority legislators, and more women, in state legislatures if political parties and interest groups made a greater effort to recruit them (Moncrief et al. 2000).

Weber (1999), in a “critical assessment of state legislative representation,” has questioned how well legislators do represent their constituents. His underlying concern is that legislators deal with too many issues in which they have a vested interest. For example, in most states, legislative redistricting is carried out by legislators, and in recent years they have succeeded in creating more and more safe districts. Legislators even write the laws that govern how their election campaigns are financed.

Multimember Districts

Most state legislatures have single-member districts, which means that only one legislator represents the district. A multimember district is one where several legislators represent the same geographic area. At one time there were many multimember districts, particularly in southern states. The most recent and detailed study of this topic (Richardson & Cooper 2003) explains that there are a variety of precise ways of defining multimember districts. The most common multimember districts have two or three seats, with a free-for-all system in which each candidate runs against every other one. About 10 legislatures make some use of multimember districts. There has been a decline in the number of states using them because the courts, particularly in southern states, have ruled that multimember districts discriminate against racial and ethnic minorities.

INTEREST GROUPS

Interest groups are the animating forces in the political process. An understanding of state politics requires a knowledge of the chief interest groups and of their stake in public policy. Holders of public office must reconcile and mediate conflicting group ambitions. In this section, we are concerned with the relationship among interest groups, political parties, and government decision makers. We compare state interest-group systems on traits such as density, diversity, and overall power over the decision-making process. What techniques do they use to achieve this power and over which body of decision makers? What restraints have states placed on their activities and how successful have they been? Does a corporate bias exist? What can we conclude about interest-group power and the democratic process?

The Number and Variety of Interests

Twenty-five years ago, interest groups in all states were far fewer than they are now. Since 1980, states have required lobbyists to register, and trends can be traced from that time. In 1980 there were 15,064 organizations registered to lobby in the states and in 1990 there were 29,352, an increase of 95%! But then the rate of growth

diminished, and in 1999 the total number of interest groups was 36,961, an increase of 26% in the century's last decade (Gray & Lowery 2003). Initially, as the states' economies grew, the number of interests also grew. More recently, a "saturation point" may have been reached as the numbers have stabilized. What can account for this slowing down of interest groups' rate of growth? Gray & Lowery (1996) have discovered that interest groups grow more slowly when they are competing with others like themselves in an economic sector. In this way, economic resources set the "carrying capacity" for each state's interest group system.

For a long time, interests were defined as bodies of individuals who shared common goals and, if organized into membership groups, tried to influence public policy. Many interest organizations still fall under this definition, but institutions now dominate the process of interest representation. An interest may be a corporation, a law firm, a bank, a utility company, a think tank, a hospital, or a university. Institutions are different because they are not membership based. Their organizational leaders do not consult the internal members when they attempt to influence public policy. A corporate institution has a continuing existence and significant assets that belong to the corporate entity, not to the individual members. Institutions are hierarchical in their internal structures of authority (Salisbury 1992, pp. 41–44). Institutions accounted for 59% of all interest organizations in 1999. Membership groups made up 19% of all organizations, and associations (composed of other organizations, which may be either membership groups or institutions, e.g., National Education Association or Chamber of Commerce) made up 22% (Gray & Lowery 2003). Membership groups accounted for 31% of all interest groups in 1980, but now the traditional banding together of citizens to ask for redress from the government is a minor part of the lobbying effort. However, nearly half of nonprofit and charitable organizations are choosing the institutional form of interest organization, so advocacy on the part of the poor or elderly is more likely to be conducted by professionals.

Interest Groups, Policy Domains, and Niches

In the past, when many states were dominated by a single enterprise, such as farming in Alabama and Iowa, or oil in Alaska, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas, the organized interests in those states could dominate the political process. Most states now have diversified economies, and a single interest cannot control the entire state policy-making process. Also, state governments have become more involved in the economic and social lives of their states in areas such as environmental protection, health, welfare, and business regulation. Therefore, we must look for the various policy areas, or domains, in which interest groups operate. Different legislative committees, executive agencies, and interest groups operate within each policy domain. It was commonly thought that these "iron triangles" produced predictable self-interested outcomes. More recently, these relationships have been described as looser, reflecting a greater number of participants, especially citizen groups, with more competition among them.

Each interest group within a policy domain has a niche in which it exercises influence. Many studies are being undertaken to determine which interest groups have more “clout,” or more powerful niches, within a policy domain. The analysis of Gray & Lowery cited above reveals that organizations representing the for-profit sector represent 77% of the total universe of interest groups. Does this mean that business dominates every niche in every domain (Olson 1982, Schlozman & Tierney 1986)? There are controls on business interests, which come from the socioeconomic sector as well as from political party activity (Heinz et al. 1993, Morehouse & Jewell 2003a, Thomas & Hrebenar 2003a, Truman 1951, Zeller 1954). As we have already noted, Gray & Lowery focus on the connection between the economy and the composition of interest-group communities. As economies increase in size, business organizations are likely to fragment into smaller interest groups, each representing the specific concerns of its members. The available economic and political resources set the “carrying capacity” of state interest-group communities (Gray & Lowery 2002).

Interest-Group System Density and Diversity

The only way to disprove or confirm these theories is to measure interest-group systems in the 50 states to see if they represent the poor or advantaged, or whether they promote or retard economic growth. Lowery & Gray’s measures of density and diversity are widely respected and used because they can be compared across states (Gray & Lowery 1993, 2001a; Lowery & Gray 1993). “Density” refers to the number of groups relative to the states’ economy (gross state product). In a dense economy, one with many interest groups, the power of each group is minimized. Important for the hypothesized relationship between political parties and interest groups, two-party competition encourages the formation of groups. Party competition creates uncertainty, and uncertainty increases the number of groups. “Diversity” measures the spread of groups across different economic and social domains such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, finance, government, and citizen groups. An interesting finding is that two-party competition increases the number of not-for-profit groups such as foundations and charitable organizations (Gray & Lowery 2001b). Morehouse & Jewell (2003a) discovered that a state’s interest-group density and political-party strength can explain variance in whether states endeavor to distribute income more equally among their citizens by progressive taxing and welfare programs.

Interest-Group Power

Thomas & Hrebenar (2003b) have recruited a community of scholars to identify and rank the power of interest groups in every state at intervals from 1985 through 2002. In their scale of interest-group strength relative to parties and other political forces, a group can be “dominant,” “dominant/complementary,” “complementary,” “complementary/subordinate,” or “subordinate.” Morehouse & Jewell have compared the Thomas & Hrebenar state rankings to their economic and political

profiles. They found that the gross state product could predict that states that were not as economically developed had dominant interest groups. States with more developed economies had more competition among interest groups and each had less clout. Tax regressivity and income equality could also predict the impact of interest groups, with the least fair tax structures and least equal income distribution indicating dominant or dominant/complementary interest-group systems. The weak and strong party-strength categories could also distinguish between dominant and complementary interest-group systems (Morehouse & Jewell 2003a).

Conclusions

Interest groups must be evaluated in relation to other groups, political parties, and government institutions. Their impact is shaped by the environment in which they exercise their power. The growth in the number of interests has slowed; has that altered the balance between social groups and business groups? Studies indicate that the expansion of the number of interest groups did not alter the traditional dominance of economic interests in the states. But interest groups limit their own growth as they compete for scarce resources. Our research shows that interest-group density has positive effects, contributing to a more equal distribution of income. However, the fact that institutions, predominantly business corporations, make up 59% of the interest-group community is disturbing. Gray & Lowery found conflict and disagreement within the policy domains, with contests over money and benefits. This may indicate that legislators and governors from strong parties can intercede to affect the balance of power among interest groups. We support the hypothesis that political parties provide the countervailing power to the dominance of wealth and business.

LABORATORIES OF SOCIAL EXPERIMENTATION

In recent years, states have faced demands for increased funding for growing numbers of social programs. Some of these demands came from the federal government. At the same time, many groups of voters appeared to be less willing to pay state taxes. This was a major cause of the recall of Governor Davis in California and his replacement by Arnold Schwarzenegger.

States have been subject to recurring fiscal crises as the economy goes from booming prosperity to serious economic depression that has thrown millions of workers out of their jobs, cut back on spending by consumers, and wiped out billions of dollars in the stock market. Most governors were reluctant to ask the legislatures for large tax increases. In addition to this, most states are continually faced with regressive tax structures, a squeeze on borrowing as interest rates increase, and reductions in federal aid on which they had become highly dependent. Recently, there has been clear evidence that the economy is growing stronger in most parts of the country, and this is increasing badly needed tax revenue. As new

issues and problems have arisen, the states have taken on the responsibility of dealing with them, and individual states have served as laboratories of federalism.

As responsibilities of state governments have grown, it has become essential to strengthen political institutions in the states, and this has occurred. Most governors are skillful politicians who know how to use the media, communicate with citizens, and compromise with legislators and interest groups. We have emphasized that gubernatorial candidates who succeed in building broad-based coalitions of political leaders and interests in order to get nominated and elected are most likely to have considerable success in getting their programs passed by the legislatures and in blocking legislative bills that they oppose. Governors have larger, more capable staffs than they used to. In most states, the agencies that put together the budget are under the governor's control.

During the last third of the twentieth century, there were sweeping changes in the state legislatures. They became more professional, holding annual sessions in most states and staying in session for longer periods of time. Committee systems were reformed.

Party leaders were more careful to select capable chairs of committees, particularly the major ones. The committees reformed their rules, holding more open sessions and providing more time for persons to testify on bills. Legislators also became more professional and learned how to deal with both lobbyists and staff members.

As laboratories of democracy, the states are responsible for providing economic growth and the infrastructure to support it. Although there has been federal involvement in state economic and community development since the 1960s, it is now a mere trickle of the former subsidies, and states and localities are forced to rely almost entirely on their own resources to promote economic development and employment opportunities. They also need to plan for land use and the protection of natural resources. Housing is needed, as well as transportation, water supply, and waste disposal. The federal government imposes regulations, especially in the area of environmental protection, but offers only limited financial assistance. States and localities are largely on their own. Oregon, an example of a state "laboratory," requires its cities to draw growth boundaries and develop plans for infrastructure to support that growth. Portland exemplifies this "smart growth" with high-density residential development, light-rail transit, and comprehensive planning.

As laboratories of democracy, the states must provide for their poor. The poverty rate in the United States is 11.7% of the population and has remained basically unchanged for 35 years. Before 1996, the federal government guaranteed cash benefits to the poor. After 1996, the federal guarantee was ended and replaced with a block grant program, TANF, which gives the states most of the responsibility for financing and administering the welfare program. Half of all adult recipients are required to work and there is a federal lifetime limit of 5 years (subject to some exemptions). TANF also has broader social goals, one of which is to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. But the 2000 census shows that less than 25% of households are traditional nuclear families. Welfare cannot

remedy the U.S. and global economies. The flight of industry from the northeastern urban centers makes it difficult for people to get jobs. There are not enough jobs for the unskilled and undereducated to end poverty or even welfare dependence.

Assessing the aftermath of welfare reform poses a challenge. Many states have been liberal in granting waivers that postponed the five-year deadline. At first, welfare success was measured by the drop in caseloads, which had plummeted. However, it appeared that most of the welfare mothers who went to work entered low-wage jobs that left them in poverty. The average poverty rate for all 50 states has dropped by less than one percentage point from the 1994 level, whereas welfare caseloads have dropped 50%! The states differ in their provision for the poor. We have hypothesized that a link exists between the beliefs of the people and the generosity with which the state provides for its poor. A regression analysis reveals that public ideology and party strength account for 36% of welfare generosity.

Despite the tradition of local control, states are playing an increasing role in making educational policy and financing education. States have surpassed local governments as the prime source of revenue for the nation's public schools. For 20 years, states have paid 50% of the cost, local governments 43%, and the federal government a paltry 7%. Given the inequalities in property tax revenues available at the local level, the degree of equality found in spending for states depends heavily on the amount of money the state government is willing to contribute to K-12 education and the formula the state uses to allocate those funds. In California, judicial decisions in 1971 and 1976 that called for greater equality in school funding, as well as efforts to provide more adequate support for education to end "invidious discrimination against the poor," have been undermined by popular initiatives that put caps on local and state funding.

The most critical problems facing public education are in the urban school systems—the central cities in metropolitan areas. One fourth of all children attending school are in urban school districts. City schools are plagued by the poverty, unemployment, racism, and human despair that pervade the neighborhoods around them. Many of the students come from dysfunctional families that lack the time or ability to prepare them for entering school or assist them with their homework. A state that is trying to improve the quality of education in its urban schools has to be concerned with providing adequate and equitable funding for education and developing programs to make teaching more effective, while also working to provide a better and safer environment for education. When central cities turn to state government for more assistance, they frequently get a lukewarm response. There is often a belief that large cities do not spend their education money wisely and effectively and that corruption is rampant. Voters who live outside the central cities and are already paying taxes to support schools in their districts are often very reluctant to pay more taxes for central-city schools.

Broad state policies and funding decisions are made by governors and legislatures. A major theme of this article has been that state political parties are growing more important, not less, and have a major impact on the making of policy. Relatively close two-party competition is now the rule rather than the exception in

most states. Close competition promotes party cohesion because parties must be cohesive to win. There are significant differences between the political parties on the issues of community infrastructure, welfare, and education. Leaders in both parties must serve the needy for fear of electoral retribution that close competition brings. State politics, parties, and policies therefore are closely intertwined and collectively have great impact on residents of the states.

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MEASURING THE EFFECTS OF TELEVISED POLITICAL ADVERTISING IN THE UNITED STATES

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■ **Abstract** In the United States, televised political advertising is the main way that modern campaigns communicate with voters. Although political scientists have made great progress in the study of its effects in recent decades, much of that progress has come in the area of advertising's indirect effects: its impact on learning and the effect of its tone on voter turnout. This essay reviews what scholars know about how political advertising affects voter decisions, voter knowledge, and election outcomes. We argue that scholars still have a long road to travel before being able to speak definitively about whether and to what extent political advertisements are successful in achieving the goal of their sponsors: winning elections. This state of affairs may be due to the vast number of methods used to measure the key independent variable in these studies: advertising exposure. Accordingly, in the last section of the essay, we review and critique seven approaches to the study of political advertising.

INTRODUCTION

Television advertising is the primary means by which most modern political campaigns in the United States try to persuade potential voters and mobilize probable supporters. Paid media—as political consultants have dubbed political advertising—has one goal and only one goal: helping its sponsor get more votes than an opponent or moving public opinion on an issue in a particular direction. It can achieve this goal in a variety of ways: by mobilizing and buttressing the loyalty of those who are predisposed to support the sponsoring candidate or issue; by persuading opponents or those whose predispositions do not put them in one camp or the other; and perhaps by demobilizing opponents. Still, for those who create and air ads, the bottom line is the bottom line. The intended effect of political advertising or paid media is to win political battles by creating and delivering biased messages. Informing and engaging the public outside of one's supporters, when and if it occurs, is a by-product or secondary effect of the effort to win political battles.

As Kinder (1998) reported, there has been an explosion of work in political communication in recent years, and in the past five years we have seen increasing amounts of work on political advertising. More generally, for the vast subfield of voting behavior and elections, determining whether political campaigns influence individual vote choice and election outcomes has become a Holy Grail. Yet there has been relatively little work specifically on whether advertising wins elections, and most of the evidence proffered about the impact of television advertising has been inferred from studies of other topics. Most of the work typically cited in the scholarly literature is about campaign effects in general, and most of the scholarly work on political advertising has revolved around its secondary effects and has not addressed whether it wins elections. Accordingly, as we review what scholars have written about political advertising—with a focus on recent years and the explosion of new research—we pay particular attention to work on and debates about these secondary effects, including the impact of advertising on citizen learning and the effect of advertising tone on turnout.

Even where there is attention, there is no consensus. That debates about the effects of advertising on learning and voter turnout remain unresolved—and that so little attention has been paid to advertising's effects on election outcomes—is the result of difficulties in studying these phenomena. One of the primary impediments has been measuring exposure to advertising. Not only have different scholars employed scores of different measurement strategies but many of those strategies are flawed. For these reasons, the latter part of this essay discusses and critiques at length the different ways scholars have measured exposure to advertising.

INFLUENCING ELECTION OUTCOMES

Although there is intense media coverage of candidate advertising and the money spent on it—and although pundits and journalists assume that all these efforts must matter—there are strikingly few studies by political scientists on the effects of television advertising on voter behavior and election outcomes. Furthermore, the great majority of work that has been done on voters and elections seems to leave little room for campaigns, in general, or advertising, in particular, to have much of an effect. We are left, then, with a situation in which almost all of the studies cited to show advertising's small impact are not actually about advertising.

In fact, the most often-cited studies on the failure of campaigns to persuade voters were conducted before television was invented. In the familiar story, pioneers in the study of political communication, fearful about the use of new tools of mass communication (radio) by World War II-era demagogues, set out to document the effect of election campaigns on a supposedly gullible and moveable mass public. Although conducted before the advent of television, these studies nevertheless became the touchstone for all studies of campaign effects. And, as the introduction to virtually any article or book on political campaigns reminds us, these early studies found campaigns had a “minimal effect” on individual voting behavior (Berelson

et al. 1954, Lazarsfeld et al. 1948). Instead, strong predispositions (defined as social background in these early studies) dominated, and people's selective exposure to political messages and political messengers mitigated the possible effects of election propaganda.

Arguments by Campbell et al. (1960) about the fundamental importance of party identification buttressed these initial findings. Although not designed like the 1940 Erie County study, which tracked the same voters over the course of a campaign to assess the campaign's effects (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948), the Michigan School's study provided strong corroborating evidence for the "minimal campaign effects" findings. Long-standing party attachments explained most political behavior.

Still, even in these early studies that concentrated on people's long-standing characteristics and attachments, there was some room for short-term influences. Personal background or party attachments were not found to be 100% determinative of vote choice, and there were still significant numbers of voters who were not genetically or ideologically predisposed toward one of the two major parties. Again, though, most of the work on these short-term factors has not focused on campaigns. Most of the work explaining what influences voters and elections in the short term has concentrated on national political and economic factors.

When the economy is strong, incomes are growing, and employment is high, times are good. When America is at peace and people are confident about national security, times are also good. Judgments about the nature of the times are used by citizens to make largely retrospective evaluations of the incumbent administration's performance, and these retrospective judgments have been shown to exert a strong influence on individual voting behavior (Fiorina 1981; Markus 1988, 1992). Building on this logic, a whole body of literature has had great success in using national political and economic conditions—often measured before the campaign started and the first ad aired—to predict election outcomes (Abramowitz 1988, Campbell 1992, Coleman 1997, Lewis-Beck & Rice 1992, Rosenstone 1983).

When scholars show that demographic characteristics, long-standing party attachments, or macroeconomic conditions successfully predict the votes of most citizens, there is little opportunity for political advertising—or any other sort of campaign activity—to have much of an effect. Thus, even as television advertising became more prevalent in election campaigns, more and more studies implied that political advertisements were likely to have modest effects—even though these studies were not specifically about television advertising. As Rosenstone (1983) puts it, "The important determinants of the outcome of the 1984 election were in place long before most people heard of Geraldine Ferraro, long before the candidates squared off in front of television cameras and long before Americans met the bear in the woods (if there was a bear)." (The bear was the star of a prominent Reagan campaign ad that warned about the continuing threat of the Soviet Union.)

Despite all this evidence about fundamental attachments and national factors, nearly every person outside the walls of the academy remained convinced that the campaign activity seen before every election must matter. Of course, the simple fact that campaigns advertise—and often massively—does not constitute sufficient

empirical evidence to demonstrate that political advertising has an impact on voters. Still, why would candidates go to the trouble to raise and spend millions of dollars on television advertising if it had no impact?

Perhaps aware of this paradox, political scientists, even when their own work showed the power of long-standing attachments and noncampaign factors, were unwilling to dismiss the role of election campaigns completely. Again, though, little of this work was about or even mentioned political advertising.

For instance, after stating that the existing literature on media effects constitutes one of the most notable embarrassments of modern social science, Bartels (1993) shows, by correcting for error in measures of exposure, that media coverage (network news coverage of the campaign) can change important attitudes about presidential approval over the course of the campaign. Similarly, Zaller (1992) argues that measurement issues as well as poor theory have doomed most studies that attempt to determine the persuasive effects of political media.

Building on the work of Hovland (1953) and McGuire (1969), Zaller argues that yielding to political messages (being persuaded) is a function of not only being exposed to a message but also having the cognitive ability to take in or reject that political message. Zaller claims that it is the interplay between predispositions, reception, and the balance of messages that determines whether citizens are influenced by media in general. When there is the right balance of forces—high levels of reception of one-sided messages by those with little ability to resist them—massive media effects can result (Zaller 1996). We are most likely to see effects when one side has more advertising on the air than the other, and we are more likely to see effects among voters with weaker attachments to the two political parties.

This framework, especially arguments about the role of predispositions and one-sided flows of information, is obviously useful in studies of advertising. Still, scholars should be cautious when combining the study of political advertising with the study of other forms of political communication. Political professionals clearly differentiate between free or earned media (news) and paid media (advertising). Although studies of paid and free media share a common understanding of the dynamics of opinion formation, voting behavior, and elections, the differences between the two are important for scholars to keep in mind. The two sorts of political communication have different goals and different types of content, and thus theoretically should have different effects. Moreover, the ways that the messages are delivered have implications for measuring exposure. Citizens do not choose to expose themselves to political ads but are instead exposed after choosing to watch certain television shows. Finally, advertising is shorter in length than most news stories and is packaged in a way to enhance reception. Thus, it may take less political engagement or cognitive ability to understand an ad's messages than a long article in *The New York Times* or a story on the national news.

Finkel's (1993) study of elections in the 1980s, which makes use of a multi-wave panel study conducted by the National Election Studies in 1980, is invariably

included among the citations in support of the minimal-effects claim that lead off most articles on campaigns. Yet, as Finkel reminds us, even early scholars with their minimal-effects models believed that campaigns had an important role in activating latent predispositions. "In the activation model, then, the mass media, campaign stimuli, and interpersonal communication processes function largely to give individuals reasons to vote in accord with their underlying predispositions; only rarely do these processes result in votes for the candidate [whom] the individual initially opposes, or the candidate who is opposed to the individual's political predispositions."

Finkel's own study shows that a simple precampaign model incorporating party identification and race can explain 80% of the votes in the 1980 election and that attitude change among voters who were undecided at the outset of the campaign did not move toward one candidate or the other. Yet, in his concluding comments, he argues that the potential for larger campaign effects exists and that the "media may play a crucial role in influencing those voters whose dispositions and stated preferences are incongruent at the outset of the campaign and thus in drawing individuals back to their predisposed candidate" (Finkel 1993).

Another study that is typically listed as confirming the minimal-effects conventional wisdom asks why trial heat results fluctuate when actual presidential election outcomes can be predicted well in advance of the actual campaign (Gelman & King 1993). To say that outcomes are predictable, however, is not to say that campaigns do not matter. On the contrary, Gelman & King suggest that the campaign is crucial for enlightening voters and bringing their vote choices into line with their fundamental political predispositions and national conditions. They point out, as others have, that equal media coverage and resources available to presidential campaigns in the United States make it unlikely that voters from one party or the other will be differentially enlightened. Thus, although the campaign of one candidate may influence voters, those effects may be canceled out by the campaign of the opposing candidate—a point made by Zaller (1992, 1996) as well.

Putting his own findings on the power of economic conditions over voting behavior in a different light, Markus (1988) characterizes campaigns as "a very important vehicle for heightening voter awareness of prevailing economic conditions and the electoral relevance thereof." Markus makes the crucial point that even a modest campaign effect, such as the 3% net campaign swing that he found in 1984, could be decisive in a close race. Petrocik (1996) makes a similar point: "That the campaign may have led voters to the 'obvious' decision (an assessment of campaigns suggested by Markus 1988), does not diminish the importance of the campaign. *However difficult or easy it was for Reagan to make a poor job performance case against Carter, it was in making it that the campaign shaped the vote.*"

Petrocik's comments come at the end of an article in which he develops and tests with media coverage a theory of issue ownership in presidential elections. In this theory, candidates try to campaign on issue turf where they have an advantage. Petrocik's evidence from the 1980 campaign, our own experience, and

conversations with political strategists, as well as a large literature in political science on agenda setting, give us confidence in the theory.

Simon (2002) develops a formal model that comes to a similar conclusion but makes the additional argument that changing the subject and not engaging in issue dialogue has detrimental consequences for American democracy. Although the issue-ownership theory of campaigns has great appeal, there has been no direct test of the theory's expectations using television advertising, the main medium through which candidates campaign.

Shaw (1999) has conducted one of the few studies that directly examine advertising effects. Using data on political television advertising buys that he gathered from the campaigns, he finds that television advertising—along with candidate visits—has a statistically significant influence on state election outcomes in the same range found by Markus in previous studies. In fact, the modest effects in gross terms are consistent with, and in some cases smaller than, those the pioneering “minimal effects” studies found.

The differences in the conclusions and interpretations between these studies conducted 50 years apart may be in the set-up. To paraphrase our forty-second president, whether campaign advertising matters may depend on what the meaning of the word “matters” is. Early studies, looking for massive effects, may have set the bar too high. Elections are won and lost at the margin, and it is at the margin that one must look for advertising effects.

Another thing to keep in mind is that most of the work reviewed above—and much of the work on campaigns and elections in general—is on presidential elections. Arguably, presidential elections are the place where one is least likely to find campaign effects in general and advertising effects in particular. Economic conditions and people's predispositions are likely to matter more in these high-profile national contests. As noted above, there is typically equality of resources in presidential races (Gelman & King 1993, Shaw 1999), and scholars are unlikely to see the sorts of one-sided flows of information that can move attitudes (Zaller 1992, 1996) in presidential contests. [See Goldstein (2004), though, for an in-depth examination of advertising flows in the 2000 presidential election.]

There is, of course, a large literature on U.S. congressional elections. There is also an especially intense debate about the influence of campaigns and campaign resources on congressional election outcomes (Erikson & Palfrey 1998; Gerber 1998; Goldstein & Freedman 2002; Jacobson 1978, 1985, 1990; Krasno & Green 1988, 1990). Most of this debate has focused on tricky issues of endogeneity. Incumbents raise more money when they are in tight races and challengers can raise more money when they are expected to do well. After much debate, the emerging conventional wisdom in this literature, which would not come as a great shock to political consultants, is that campaign spending has a positive influence on votes. Although increased spending might have a small and diminishing effect on a candidate's vote share, it is nonetheless a beneficial effect that could be significant in a tight race. Zaller (1992) tackles these questions at the individual level by examining outpartisan defections to the incumbent in U.S. House races in 1978.

He finds that the campaign does matter. Increased spending by the challenger significantly reduced voting for the incumbent among those affiliated with the challenger's political party.

None of these studies, however, examines television advertising specifically, even though it comprises the greatest proportion of campaign spending in most congressional races. Few studies (Goldstein & Freedman 2000, West 1994) have focused on the effect of ads on voter choice in congressional elections. Scholars know little about whether, how, and to what extent television ads influence election outcomes. The minimal-effects conventional wisdom, based perhaps on overly high expectations and slight mischaracterization of previous work, seems to have been replaced by a conventional wisdom in which the campaign is crucial in enlightening and activating voters. Although such arguments about the effects of campaigns and advertisements seem plausible, there is little evidence that helps us understand whether television advertising is responsible for the three percentage points that Markus discusses, the activation process that Finkel explains, and the enlightenment Gelman & King argue for.

BY-PRODUCT EFFECTS OF ADVERTISING

Although the main goal of those who sponsor political advertising is to win elections, advertising can also influence what citizens know about candidates and public policy and how engaged citizens are in their own governance. And, as discussed above, in influencing what voters know, ads can influence whom voters choose.

Voter Learning

Perhaps the greatest optimists about the potential of political advertising are those who study citizen learning. Although there is no agreement about the impact of advertising on voters' knowledge of candidates, more than one study has found evidence that exposure to advertising has a positive influence on learning.

One classic finding is that of Patterson & McClure (1976), who compared citizen learning from advertising and television news. They reported that people exposed to more political commercials on television were more knowledgeable about the policies of candidates McGovern and Nixon in the 1972 campaign. But people who watched the network evening news regularly were no more informed about the candidates than people who seldom watched these broadcasts. Political ads, then, despite common stereotypes of them as image-centered and devoid of issue content, appeared actually to inform the electorate.

A more recent study backs this conclusion. Brians & Wattenberg (1996) use survey data to compare the relative impacts of ad exposure, newspaper reading, and television news viewing on knowledge of the 1992 presidential candidates. They find that use of all three media aids learning, but ad exposure is the strongest

predictor of political learning of the three. And in the final month of the campaign, exposure to political advertising is the only significant predictor of issue recall. Interestingly, these findings hold when Brians & Wattenberg examine only exposure to negative political advertising. The authors therefore suggest that concerns about negative advertising are without warrant: “The fact that much of viewers’ knowledge comes from negative advertising should serve to reassure critical observers who fear that political attacks harm the American viewing and voting public” (Brians & Wattenberg 1996).

However, the work of Zhao & Chaffee (1995) gives very limited support to the conclusions of Brians & Wattenberg. Zhao & Chaffee examine surveys taken in six different electoral contests. In only three does exposure to advertising have a discernible positive impact on learning, and in only one of the six surveys does advertising have a greater effect on knowledge than does television news viewing. (That occurred in the high-profile and racially charged 1990 North Carolina Senate race, which pitted Senator Jesse Helms against an African-American opponent, Harvey Gantt.)

Others argue that the effects of advertising on knowledge are conditional. That is, exposure to advertising is more likely to have an impact in certain situations and on certain voters. For instance, advertising may be more effective at conveying information to less interested and less informed individuals than other media. Just et al. (1990) conclude that ads do a better job of informing electorates than debates do because debates can be confusing for many voters. By contrast, “ads, which tend to present a single viewpoint, reduce confusion and aid learning for all kinds of viewers” (Just et al. 1990, p. 131).

The experimental work of Hitchon & Chang (1995) suggests that issues mentioned in ads sponsored by women are more easily recalled by viewers than issues mentioned in ads sponsored by men, and that recall is better for neutral ads and positive ads than for negative ads. Knowledge of candidates’ positions is also heightened when the ad is sponsored by a candidate as opposed to being sponsored by an interest group (Pfau et al. 2002). Finally, people tend to recall more information about an advertisement when it is sponsored by a preferred candidate than when it is not (Faber & Storey 1984).

Negativity and Turnout

Many who study the effects of negative advertising on voter turnout are less sanguine than voter-learning researchers about the effects of exposure to political commercials on the average citizen. The major impetus for much recent work on the topic was the finding of Ansolabehere et al. (1994), based on a series of carefully conducted experiments, that negative advertising reduced voter turnout rates by as much as 5%. They backed this claim with an analysis of aggregate turnout in Senate elections, where they found a similar decline. Clearly, this was an important finding that, if true in the real world, served as a warning that the ubiquitous

30-second commercial posed a threat to American democracy. Ansolabehere & Iyengar (1995) were so concerned about this potential that they suggested ways in which the government might discourage the use of negative advertising. These ideas included requiring television stations to charge their lowest rate for positive advertising and guaranteeing that candidates who were the targets of attacks would have equal time to respond.

Although they were not the first to study the impact of advertising tone on voter turnout, the 1994 study by Ansolabehere and his colleagues, as well as Ansolabehere & Iyengar's 1995 book, which drew the same conclusion, ushered in a spate of studies on the topic of negative political advertising. Many scholars, however, arrive at different conclusions about the relationship between ad tone and turnout. The studies come in three primary forms: experiments, individual-level survey analysis, and aggregate-level turnout data analysis.

Political scientists generally shy away from experiments, but a few mass communications scholars have explored the impact of ad tone on turnout experimentally. Garramone et al. (1990), for example, found no difference in the likelihood of turnout between subjects shown negative ads about a fictional candidate and those shown positive ads about a fictional candidate. Pinkelton's (1998) experiment found that election involvement (measured by a scale that tapped the degree to which subjects cared about an election and found it interesting, stimulating, and exciting) rose as the amount of negativity in an advertisement rose. He suggested that increased involvement should lead to increased participation at the polls but did not test this directly.

Survey research on the topic of negative advertising generally supports the claim that it either increases or has no impact on voter turnout. Wattenberg & Briens (1999), for instance, examined the 1992 and 1996 American National Election Studies and found that negative advertising had a mobilizing effect in 1992 but no impact on turnout in 1996. Similarly, Finkel & Geer (1998) found a conditional impact of advertising tone on turnout. Only among political independents did tone affect potential voters' probability of voting. Independents exposed to a negative campaign were more likely to participate in an election.

Goldstein & Freedman (1999, 2002) provide additional evidence that turnout rises as negativity rises. Their earlier study, which examined the 1997 Virginia gubernatorial election, created a measure of individual-level exposure to advertising based on the number of ads aired in a respondent's media market and that respondent's television viewing habits. Negativity had a strong and positive impact on voter turnout. The authors replicated their results in the second study, which examined the 1996 presidential election. Again, they found a positive relationship between negativity and voter turnout.

One survey-based project found some support for the claim that negative advertising demobilizes the electorate. Lemert et al.'s (1999) study of the 1996 U.S. Senate race in Oregon suggested that Republicans were less likely to show up to vote when they were exposed to negative advertising sponsored by Gordon

Smith, the Republican candidate. In other words, there appeared to have been a backlash against the candidate's negative tactics, but the authors failed to find a similar effect among Democrats exposed to the Democratic candidate's negative advertising.

Studies based on aggregate-level data provide mixed results about the relationship between advertising tone and voter turnout. Djupe & Peterson (2002) discovered a mobilizing effect of negative advertising in the 1998 U.S. Senate primaries. But Finkel & Geer (1998), who examined presidential elections since 1960, and Wattenberg & Brians (1999), who examined U.S. Senate elections, both conclude that negative advertising and voter participation at the polls were unrelated.

At the other end of the spectrum, the aggregate-level work of Ansolabehere, Iyengar, and their colleagues supports their experimental work showing that negative advertising reduces turnout. Their analysis of U.S. Senate contests (Ansolabehere et al. 1994) and their subsequent reanalysis of the same data (Ansolabehere et al. 1999) suggest that turnout is ~5% higher in positive campaigns than in negative campaigns.

In sum, much of the work that has followed the pioneering experiments of Ansolabehere et al. has run counter to their claim that negativity reduces turnout. But it is too soon to conclude that negativity increases turnout. Indeed, Lau et al.'s (1999) meta-analysis of 19 research findings on the impact of tone on turnout indicates no relationship between the two.

Where is the study of tone and turnout headed? We see future research taking two directions. One is a more thorough examination of the psychological impacts of negativity. Finding a correlation between tone and turnout does not explain why that relationship may exist. Does negativity cause voters to pay more attention to an advertisement, increasing their knowledge of the candidates and thus reducing the costs of voting? Does negativity create an emotional response in voters that drives them to the polls? Does negativity increase cynicism about the political system, leading voters to stay home? Or does negative information, because voters give it more weight, make voters perceive more differences between candidates? Several studies have begun to study these causal paths between negative ad exposure and participation, but more work remains to be done.

A second area for future research is a refinement in the measurement of advertising tone. Sigelman & Kugler (2003) suggest that the way people perceive advertising tone does not match the way social scientists measure it. The authors report widespread disagreement among survey respondents living in the same area about whether a particular race is best characterized as positive or negative.

Kahn & Kenney (1999, p. 878) take a step toward addressing this criticism by making a distinction between negativity—"legitimate criticism"—and mudslinging, which they define as "harsh and shrill information that is only tangentially related to governing." They find that the former increases turnout, whereas the latter reduces it. Freedman & Lawton (2004) make a similar distinction between "fair" and "unfair" advertisements and find that turnout declines only when opposing candidates both run "unfair" advertising campaigns.

APPROACHES TO MEASURING ADVERTISING EXPOSURE

In our discussion of political advertising, we have reviewed a variety of work that has generated a variety of theoretical expectations and has employed a variety of empirical methods. Unfortunately, it has often been difficult to draw any hard conclusions about the impact of advertising on vote choice or voter learning, or about the impact of its tone on voter turnout. There is just not enough agreement in the literature. We submit that one reason for this lack of consensus is that scholars have used a vast number of methods to measure the key independent variable in these studies: advertising exposure. Diversity of method is good, but many of the methods employed have serious drawbacks.

In the remainder of this essay, we review and critique seven approaches to the study of political advertising. Four of these approaches focus on measuring the information environment of a particular campaign through the use of aggregate campaign spending data, archival collections of television commercials, logs from the public files of television stations, and tracking data. The other three approaches—experimentation, self reports by survey respondents, and proxy measures of exposure—attempt to measure the *effects* of advertising. Each of these methods has weaknesses that make it difficult for scholars both to characterize the information environment and to infer how campaign messages influence the attitudes and behavior of citizens.

Campaign Spending

One common proxy for the campaign information environment is candidate spending. By measuring campaign expenditures, scholars have sought to make descriptive inferences about the impact and relative volume of candidate messages. For instance, some scholars have examined the relationship between expenditures and election outcomes (Gerber 1998, Green & Krasno 1990, Jacobson 1990); others have explored the impact of candidate spending on voter knowledge and affect (Coleman 2001, Coleman & Manna 2000). Although candidate spending may be a reasonable “quick and dirty” proxy for the intensity of campaign communications, the measure is far removed from the actual messages that voters receive and to which they respond. Indeed, researchers have recognized this mismatch, referring to a “black box” through which campaign money is translated into electoral outcomes. As Coleman & Manna (2000, p. 759) acknowledge, “campaign money must work through campaign strategy, advertising content, advertising frequency, and other intermediaries.”

Except perhaps in a few very corrupt places, money does not directly buy votes. Rather, money affords candidates the means by which to spread their message or bring their supporters to the polls, two activities designed to increase the candidate’s vote share. The important point, as Ansolabehere & Gerber (1994, p. 1107) note, is that “total campaign spending may not be a good measure of expenditures devoted to actual campaigning.” Using Fritz & Morris’ (1992) comprehensive analysis of

Federal Election Commission spending reports, Ansolabehere & Gerber separate campaign expenditures into three types: “direct communications with voters,” such as radio or television commercials; other campaign activities, such as polling or the hiring of a consultant; and spending that is unconnected to a candidate’s own campaign, such as a donation of money to another candidate. The authors find that House challengers devote, on average, only 58% of total expenditures to campaign communications. For House incumbents, the comparable figure is only 42% (Ansolabehere & Gerber 1994, p. 1110).

More generally, there are three drawbacks to the use of aggregate spending data in tapping the information environment and testing for campaign effects. First, the use of aggregate spending assumes that every citizen in a particular constituency is exposed to the same volume of campaign messages. Such an assumption is just plain wrong. Political advertising is not evenly distributed across the United States—or even across one state. Scholars have demonstrated substantial variation across media markets in the volume of candidate advertising, largely due to differences in the competitiveness of a race in the area (Just et al. 1996). These differences are particularly striking in presidential campaigns, in which some television markets receive no advertising at all, whereas others receive thousands of paid spots (Goldstein & Freedman 2002, Hagen et al. 2002).

How much advertising a campaign dollar will buy varies geographically as well. Quite simply, \$100,000 will purchase much more in Cheyenne, Wyoming, or Alpena, Michigan, than it will in Los Angeles or New York City. Spending measures, then, are not comparable across media markets. Granted, this problem can be addressed by weighting spending by measures of gross ratings points (which account for the differential cost of air time), but such ratings information is not readily available, and few scholars, if any, take the time to make such corrections.

A final drawback of using aggregate campaign expenditures as a measure of campaign advertising exposure is that such figures ignore the spending of noncandidate actors, including parties and interest groups. This is an increasingly important limitation because “soft money” expenditures have skyrocketed over the past few years. Thus, researchers who make use of candidate spending measures as reported to the Federal Election Commission may be fundamentally understating the extent of campaign spending in a race. Moreover, the error in the measure is likely systematic, not random, because both party and interest group spending is generally targeted at a small number of very competitive races (Goldstein & Freedman 2002, Herrnson 2004).

Archival Data

A second common approach to measuring the content of campaign messages makes use of archived political advertisements. For example, Finkel & Geer (1998), to estimate the effect of campaign tone on voter turnout, utilized a detailed content analysis of presidential advertisements obtained from the political commercial archives at the University of Oklahoma. Kahn & Kenney (1999) took this same

approach in their study of negative advertising in U.S. Senate elections; Kaid & Johnston (1991) used the Oklahoma archive to assess the negativity of presidential campaign advertising over time. If a scholar wants to describe the characteristics of the advertisements that a campaign produces, this approach is a good one. But if one intends to study the effects of advertising exposure—as Finkel & Geer and Kenney & Kahn seek to do—or even to describe the information environment, then this measure has many problems.

Specifically, even if archives have a complete collection of advertisements produced in a particular election [a dubious assumption challenged by Jamieson et al. (1998)], archival collections contain no information on how many times each ad was broadcast. By default, then, an advertisement that was aired 100 times receives the same weight in analyses as an advertisement that aired 1000 times. Indeed, some spots held by archives may never have been broadcast at all. Prior (2001) addresses this problem in one market by showing that one's conclusions may depend on whether one examines advertisements aired or advertisements made. Archival data, then, allow researchers to comment on the content of advertisements produced but not on the actual distribution of advertisements on the air or the effects of viewing these advertisements in a campaign context.

A second problem with archival data is the lack of state- and market-level data on the geographical distribution of airings. This lack forces the assumption that all voters in a given year were exposed to the same volume and mix of advertisements. As argued above with respect to campaign spending, this is surely not the case.

Ad Buys

Some scholars have collected advertising data directly from television stations by examining station logs, advertising purchase contracts, or billing invoices. The advantage of this approach is that one can get a good sense of the volume and timing of ads aired in a given market during a campaign. Station logs detail when an ad actually aired on a television station. Magleby (2001) and Shaw (1999) are among the relatively few scholars who have measured advertising exposure by obtaining documents from television stations.

This approach, however, has some drawbacks. Station logs are not public records and thus may be unavailable to researchers; moreover, patterns of availability may not vary randomly. Purchase contracts, which all stations must keep in their public files, are agreements between buyers and stations to air ads, but all advertisements listed on a purchase contract are not necessarily broadcast, nor broadcast in the time period indicated on the contract. Television stations often pre-empt a commercial's broadcast, a practice that is especially common close to the day of the election, when candidates may engage in a price war for scarce commercial time. A third set of documents, billing invoices, accurately report what was aired and the price paid for each ad, but most television stations do not put these documents in their public files. Moreover, some stations omit billing invoices and contracts issued to political parties and interest groups. Ideally, stations would

keep detailed invoices for all candidate, party, and interest group activity, but this is rarely the case.

Another major problem with collecting television station records is that the task is extremely time consuming. If one is interested in a single campaign (and hence a single media market or a handful of markets), this problem may be tractable, but any analysis of multiple campaigns would require intensive data collection, and such efforts—given the existence of over 200 media markets in the United States—would be nearly impossible for a presidential campaign or for the universe of congressional campaigns. This limits the generalizability of claims drawn from an analysis of a handful of television stations. In addition, television stations provide the researcher no information about the content of ads, making it impossible to say anything about the tone of the campaign or the issues mentioned.

Tracking Data

We now turn to a unique and relatively new source of information about television advertising: advertising tracking data obtained from the Campaign Media Analysis Group (CMAG), a commercial firm that specializes in providing detailed tracking information to campaigns in real time. These data include two types of information: frequency information about when ads aired and in which markets, and information about each ad's content. Each case contains information about the date and time of the ad's airing, the television station and program on which it was broadcast, and its content.

CMAG, using a satellite tracking system, collects the larger set of broadcast data. The company currently has "ad detectors" in each of the 100 largest U.S. media markets. In 2001, CMAG recorded advertising in 83 markets, and in 2000 and earlier years, the company recorded advertising in the nation's top 75 markets. These detectors track advertisements on the major national networks, as well as national cable networks.

Because the unit of analysis is an ad airing, with information on the timing (both the day and time of day) and media market in which it aired, scholars can tell precisely how many ads (of whatever tone, sponsor, or other classification) aired on particular days in particular markets, sponsored by particular political actors. These data can then be aggregated to the level of the unique ad, and can be aggregated on market, ad type, or some other variable.

The use of ad tracking data is nonetheless open to critique. One potential criticism of the CMAG data is that they are not comprehensive. The company's system tracks advertising in only the 100 largest of the 210 media markets in the United States. But according to Nielsen Media Research (2002), those largest 100 markets cover 86% of the television households in the country. Although there are gaps in CMAG's coverage of the country—advertising in the hotly contested 2002 South Dakota Senate race was untracked, for example—almost all of the respondents in any nationally representative poll are covered. One concern, however, is whether one's results might be biased by excluding people who live outside those 100 markets, who would tend to reside in more rural areas.

The CMAG data can tell scholars what political advertisements aired on the vast majority of American television sets. But are the data valid? That is, would one get the same results by visiting television stations and digging through their logs or billing invoices? Because we have used these data in the past, we admittedly have at least a small interest in showing that the tracking data report what actually aired. That said, our own work on the question, which involved the unenviable task of comparing tracking data with billing invoices obtained from television stations from around the country, suggests a high correlation between what the tracking data say and what the invoices report.

Finally, although tracking data may provide a detailed portrait of the campaign information environment in one locale, they do not provide a good individual-level measure of exposure to that advertising. Because different individuals watch television for different lengths of time and watch different television programs, there will be great variation across individuals in their levels of exposure to political advertising—even within the same media market. This critique, of course, applies to measures of campaign spending, archival research, and ad buys as well. Our recommendation to scholars who seek an individual-level measure of exposure is that they combine these measures of the information environment with measures of television viewing habits obtained from surveys (see Freedman & Goldstein 1998, Goldstein & Freedman 2002).

Experimental Manipulation

The four methods discussed above have been used to describe the volume or content of political advertising in a campaign and sometimes, in turn, to estimate the effects of exposure to this advertising. The three methods that follow bypass direct measures of the campaign information environment in their attempts to gauge the individual-level effects of advertising exposure.

This research has made sporadic but significant use of experimental design (Ansolabehere et al. 1994, Ansolabehere & Iyengar 1995, Garramone et al. 1990, Kahn & Geer 1994, Noggle & Kaid 2000). The allure of experimentation is obvious. By enabling researchers to control which subjects are assigned to which treatments, the nature of the stimuli to which subjects are exposed, and the conditions under which such exposure takes place, experiments afford an unparalleled degree of internal validity. Moreover, by manipulating specific components of a stimulus, experimental researchers can achieve a high degree of specificity in the causal inferences they make. As Kinder & Palfrey (1993, p. 11) argue in calling for more experimentation in political science, experiments offer an “unrivaled capacity. . . to provide decisive tests of causal propositions” and constitute “a tool of unexcelled power and precision.”

As is well known, however, the clear advantages of experimentation are offset by potential pitfalls. There is a direct tradeoff between internal validity, maximized by the rigorous control of the laboratory, and external validity, the ability to move outside the lab and beyond a particular experimental context in making inferences. We care little about how a particular group of subjects responds to a particular

set of stimuli; experimental findings are useful only to the extent that they allow inferences about processes that occur in the real world. For many questions—including some asked in the social sciences—the fit between what goes on in the laboratory and the analogous process in the real world may be close enough to warrant meaningful inferences. When it comes to measuring the impact of campaign ad exposure, however, external validity may be so compromised that researchers must proceed with caution in drawing inferences from experimental findings. Specifically, there are concerns about the nature of the treatment, the setting in which the treatment is administered, and the measurement of the outcome variables of interest.

There are several concerns about the realism of the treatment. First, researchers must take care that the stimuli—the manipulated ads themselves—successfully mimic the kinds of spots that candidates and their allies are actually producing and broadcasting. This, of course, is easy enough to accomplish with modern digital editing techniques. Actual ads can be spliced and diced in convincing ways without doing too much damage to realism. This is done in the better studies. Second, television ads in the real world are embedded in shows—most often news broadcasts—and therefore experiments should not test spots in isolation. Once again, better studies are careful to present ads in the context of actual programming. A third issue, however, concerns the number, the intensity, and the pacing of the spots to which subjects are exposed. In the real world, people are exposed to a given spot dozens or even hundreds of times over the course of the increasingly long campaign period. In the lab, however, it is unusual to find subjects exposed to a spot more than once or twice during an experiment. Thus, experiments must make inferences about overall exposure effects on the basis of spots seen only a few times (at best). Related to these issues of the treatment's realism is the fact that people view political ads in a comprehensive media environment. In a typical day, they view ads for candidates running for several offices (president, Senate, House, governor), hear about these candidates on their local news broadcasts, and read about these candidates in their newspapers. An experiment is unable to recreate this complex, and often cluttered, information environment.

An additional concern emerges from the setting in which ad exposure typically takes place. In the real world, people see campaign ads in all sorts of places—in bars, in bowling alleys, and at the gym. But by far the most common circumstance for encountering a political advertisement is in one's own living room, usually after dinner but before prime time. People see ads while they are sitting on couches or in favorite chairs, talking on the phone, chasing children or dogs, finishing a meal, or reading a magazine. In short, they encounter campaign spots while going about their own lives in their own homes. This is, obviously, a far cry from the relatively sterile, decidedly artificial environments in which even the best laboratory experiments are conducted. To be sure, researchers may take pains to alleviate such artificiality; some provide couches, reading material, or doughnuts

or other snacks in an effort to make the viewing experience as normal as possible. Moreover, with the advent of web-tv and other new technologies, researchers have the ability to deliver advertising and other stimuli to subjects in their own homes. This is a potentially significant step forward, although scholars have only recently begun to take advantage of these opportunities. Of course, even such advances do nothing to address the issues just raised about the nature of the treatment itself.

In addition to concerns about the delivery of the experimental treatment, i.e., the independent variable, experimental approaches also raise questions about the validity of the outcome, or dependent variable. Particularly when researchers are interested in the effects of ad exposure on political behaviors such as voter turnout (or for that matter, actual vote choice), it is difficult to find studies that go beyond hypothetical and prospective reports such as intended turnout. Obviously, there is reason to be concerned about subjects' ability to accurately evaluate and to fairly report the probability of future (especially hypothetical) behavior, and these concerns are exacerbated when such behavior is clearly subject to social desirability biases.

Given these fundamental impediments to external validity, researchers engaged in the study of campaign advertising must find ways to move outside the laboratory. Doing so involves real challenges, and ultimately, many of the most common approaches suffer from their own fundamental limitations, as we further discuss below.

Individual-Level Recall

Another method of measuring advertising exposure asks survey respondents if they recall having viewed a political advertisement, and if so, what the advertisement was about (Brians & Wattenberg 1996, Wattenberg & Brians 1999). The advantage of this approach is that it creatively measures the campaign environment by looking at a presumed effect of advertising exposure—the ability to recall the advertisement. Thus it is a “bottom-up” rather than a “top-down” measure. Although the approach has more external validity than experimental studies, the internal validity of the recall measure is questionable, so it is difficult to establish the causal chain between advertising exposure and behavior.

First, researchers agree that, in general, people's ability to recall information is poor (Niemi et al. 1980). This appears to hold true in the context of campaign advertising. Ansolabehere et al. (1999), for example, demonstrated through an experiment that over half of subjects failed to recall a television ad they had seen just 30 minutes prior. And as adherents of the on-line model of information processing would argue, even if a viewer does not recall an ad, it still may have an effect on his or her evaluation of the featured candidate (Lodge et al. 1989).

Second, and more seriously, there is potential endogeneity between ad recall and political behavior (Ansolabehere et al. 1999). For example, although seeing

campaign advertisements may influence one's probability of voting, one's propensity to vote may influence how much attention one pays to campaign messages. At the same time, although some differences in people's abilities to recall information surely have to do with varying levels of exposure, some of the variation can be explained by differences across individuals. In other words, recall is a function of more than just exposure. Indeed, in their reanalysis of the debate surrounding negative campaigns and turnout, Goldstein & Freedman (1999) include measures of the "perceived negativity of ads"—one measure of recall—and find no effect on turnout when controlling for exposure as measured by the advertising tracking data described above.

In addressing the problems of endogeneity in recall measures, Ansolabehere et al. (1999) propose a two-stage estimation procedure in an effort to control for "actual" exposure. As Goldstein & Freedman (2002) argue, such a correction is at best extremely difficult to pull off, and perhaps impossible.

Other Proxy Measures

Because self-reported exposure to the news media can be unreliable, Zaller (1992) and Price & Zaller (1993) argue that message reception (being exposed to a message and accepting it) can be best tapped by an individual's level of political awareness, as measured by a political information scale constructed from a set of factual questions about current events and leaders. This measurement strategy may make sense when applied to messages from the news media or to a total campaign environment, but it is less useful when applied to the specific case of television advertising. Whether one knows who Boris Yeltsin or William Rehnquist is, for example, should theoretically have little relation to whether one watches television programs during which many campaign commercials typically air. Although viewers may learn such facts while watching news programs, during which many political ads do air, advertising appears during many types of shows, including those unlikely to convey political information (game shows and afternoon talk shows, for example). More to the point, such information has even less to do with the content of most political advertising. Political knowledge, then, is a tenuous proxy for campaign ad exposure.

CONCLUSION

Televised political advertising is the main way that modern campaigns communicate with voters, and over the past decade, political scientists have made great progress in the study of its effects. But much of that progress has come in the area of advertising's indirect effects: its impact on learning and the effect of its tone on voter turnout. Scholars still have a long road to travel before being able to speak definitively about whether and to what extent political advertisements are successful in achieving the goal of their sponsors: winning elections.

It is safe to say now that campaigns in general do matter. Experiencing a political campaign may alter the criteria by which voters judge candidates and may activate and enlighten voter preferences. But do these effects occur because people are exposed to news broadcasts, because they read the newspaper, because they attend candidate speeches, because they receive a bundle of campaign pieces in the mail, or because they are exposed to a barrage of 30-second television advertisements? In other words, what persuades, what enlightens, and what activates?

Answering these questions will require, among other things, giving political advertising more scholarly attention. Given advertising's documented effects on political learning, we should expect that it would be persuasive as well, but it is difficult to assess this when advertising is omitted from most studies of campaigns. Of course, acknowledging the potential impacts of advertising is not the same as measuring them well. This is why we have reviewed a long list of potential approaches, pointing out the benefits and drawbacks of each. In our view, some of the approaches have too many problems to be helpful. Researchers may need to take one step backward to develop better measures of exposure in order to take two steps forward to assess advertising effects.

Also, we would recommend that scholars think creatively about measuring campaign advertising. Existing research, for instance, tends to ignore the possibility that an ad aired three months before Election Day may have a different impact than an ad aired the day before the election. One possibility is that people have little incentive to pay attention to the campaign so many months before they must vote, and even if they do pay enough attention to receive an early message, they are likely to have forgotten it three months later. On the other hand, an ad aired early may have a greater impact because partisan attachments are not yet activated. Despite these possibilities, almost all empirical research treats all ads, regardless of when they aired, equally.

Consistent with these points, much previous research has not been structured in a way to capture advertising effects. More and more of the campaign, including campaign advertising, is starting earlier and earlier in the year. Studies that take "baseline" measures of attitudes in September may have already missed significant movements in voter opinion.

In general, the theoretical framework is in place for scholars to learn more about political advertising and its effects. Still, a more complete understanding of the impact of advertising on individual behavior, attitudes, and election outcomes waits for better measures of exposure and a design that will enable researchers to track voters over the course of a long campaign. Researchers learned much from the Lazarsfeld panel studies conducted in the 1940s and the multi-wave panel study conducted by the National Election Studies in 1980. We hope we do not have to wait another 20 years for a panel study—this one with improved measures of exposure—to keep the ball going down the field in the study of political advertising.

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OAKESHOTT AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

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■ **Abstract** Michael Oakeshott (1901–1990) achieved arguably the most sophisticated philosophical understanding of politics in recent times. His characteristic skepticism extended to the possibility of creating a genuine science of politics. This chapter sketches the development of his conception of political understanding. It begins with his early elaboration of the modal character of all knowledge, discusses his criticism of rationalism and reflections on the appropriate curriculum for studying politics in a university. It concludes by examining the theoretical basis of his rejection of the idea that politics could be analyzed as a field governed by natural laws.

OAKESHOTT'S PLURAL MODES

The middle of the twentieth century was not generally regarded as a vintage time for political philosophy. Linguistic philosophy and a sub-Humean disdain for evaluative argument were dominant. Philosophers were commonly thought to be merely persuasive dealers in ideal states of things—contractualism, rights, the organic state, social justice, and so on. They were often accorded a subordinate role as methodological hygienists whose proper business was keeping scientific method in good repair, rather like the tiny birds that live off cleaning the teeth of crocodiles. The hard-headed thing was to develop a real science of politics, and at every level of academic sophistication, from Burnham (1963) to Weldon (1953), political philosophy was denigrated. Indeed, at one point it was famously declared to be dead (Laslett 1956). Hardly had this certificate of death been issued than the corpse sprang to life with Rawls (1971), and a revived normativism began to sweep all before it. In fact, however, political philosophy had been flourishing throughout this period, with notable figures ranging from Popper (1945) and Berlin (1969) to Strauss (1952) and Voegelin (1952). Michael Oakeshott was one of these figures, and his marvellously lucid philosophical account of politics and the forms of political understanding, entirely without normativist concerns, is the most suggestive available to us.

In his lifetime (he died in 1990), Oakeshott was considered rather disdainful of political science, and although he always denied it, there is a certain truth to

the charge. The real question, however, is not how he evaluated political science but what he judged to be the categories within which types of knowledge were possible.

A concern with the logic of understanding goes back to his early career as a don at Cambridge in the 1920s, when he judged that modern culture was dominated, to the point of sterility, by the practice of assimilating everything into a single world of understanding conceived in terms of science and practice. In such a scheme, history, for example, was useful merely because it taught us lessons about the past; science was assimilated into technology as the set of skills that could satisfy ever-expanding desires; and philosophy itself was often thought to be the inquiry by which we get the basic principles of life in order so that we can deduce from them how to manage society. Here, then, was a hideously monochrome world in which scholarship lost its independent character and became nothing more than an instrument for achieving social purposes on which, in the end, we could all rationally agree.

As against this reduction of the human world to a single utilitarian domain, Oakeshott's first major work, *Experience and Its Modes* (1933), argued for a plurality of modes of experience. By this term he referred to logics of inquiry that each construed the world in terms of some basic postulate (Minogue 1993). In principle, there might be any number of such modes, but Oakeshott analyzed three—practice, history, and science—and treated philosophy as the work of understanding how modality itself worked. Later, in an essay called “the voice of poetry in the conversation of mankind,” he included art as another mode (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], pp. 488–541; on the poetic character of human life in Oakeshott, see Coats 2000, p. 103 ff.). This intellectual map found a central role for science in explaining the world *sub specie quantitatis*. Science was the attempt to establish quantitative relations between abstract entities, such as mass and gravitation or supply and demand.

The thrust of Oakeshott's argument was that the very model of intellectual error was jumping from one mode to another. Practice might indeed want to draw lessons from history, but it could do this only by transforming the logical character of what it touched. History was not a set of premises from which the conclusions of practical syllogisms could be drawn in the form of lessons to be learned. It was an account of how events emerged out of a concurrence of circumstances, and although these circumstances were not strictly “unique,” they were certainly particular. Such events could generate laws or analogies only if an event were understood in nonhistorical terms as an instance of something more general. The French Revolution, for example, lost its specificity if it became merely an instance of the thing called a “revolution.” Subjected to such a demand for laws of human relating, history quietly tiptoed away, as it were; the same words, uttered in the context of an abstract inquiry, would mean something different. There was, indeed, nothing at all wrong with treating the past as a set of instances and drawing conclusions from it (though one might often draw the wrong conclusions). The point was simply that these conclusions were logically nonderivable from history. Similarly, science

created its own world of concepts, and they could not be identified with practice. We are familiar with water, but no water quite corresponds with H₂O (Auspitz 1993).

THE REJECTION OF RATIONALISM

It will already be clear that Oakeshott is a philosopher with a close and focused concern to get logical relations and the meanings of words right. Apart from a certain irritation at various errors of his time, he has no practical or political message to advance, though he has often been misunderstood on this point. To illustrate what I mean, let me advert to an episode in his mid-career. In 1951, already enjoying a considerable reputation in scholarly circles, he was appointed to the chair of politics at the London School of Economics in succession to Harold Laski, who had recently died. Following war service, Oakeshott in the late 1940s had been editing the *Cambridge Journal* and had there published a number of famous essays criticizing what he called rationalism. By rationalism he meant a purely instrumental concern with actions and institutions—the cast of mind that detects a problem, analyzes it in abstract terms, and comes up with a solution by which the thing required can be achieved. Such a formula seems the essence of common sense, yet also simple-minded. It is both. In politics, rationalism assumes that the state is a machine fitted with improvable plug-in components. Oakeshott, by contrast, insisted that a state was a complex of interrelated persons, ideas, and institutions, forever engaged in the business of sustaining a coherence that was continually disrupted by the untidy strivings of its subjects. In the atmosphere of postwar reconstruction over which the British Labour government was presiding after 1945, the government was excited by many projects it hoped would improve the world. In criticizing rationalism, Oakeshott was no doubt thinking particularly about such schemes.

His actual writing on rationalism, however, was delicately academic. He traced the intellectual fashion for rationalism back to sixteenth-century writers such as Bacon and Descartes, who sought to pioneer a new way of improving the human condition. Knowledge being power, a method that put the wits of men on a level could unlock our latent power over nature. From the Enlightenment onward, this fashion spread into European social reflection; by the mid-twentieth century, it had infected most thinking, especially about politics. The essence of rationalism in politics was conceiving of social and political issues as problems to be solved. Hayek's (1978, pp. 3–22) criticism of constructionism was one way of pointing to what was wrong about rationalism. Oakeshott argued that it involved a mistake about knowledge, for it assumed that practical success consisted in mastering a technique that could be taught to most people. This account of knowledge (and thus also of the range of possible reforms) excluded from consideration the “know-how” and the natural talents that were also needed. The confusion consisted in believing that all knowledge was technical and could come from a book—or, in the case

of politics, from an ideology. All human activities, Oakeshott affirmed, involve natural skills that cannot be taught from a book. A cook is not the conjunction of an abstract human agent and a cookbook, for without some knowledge of how to go about making an appetizing dish, the agent would not know how to begin. Rationalism in politics may lead to vast concentrations of power to attain ends, as with totalitarian states, but it also occurs with grandiose bits of benevolence such as Robert Owen's proposal (Oakeshott quotes it with mockery) for "a world convention to emancipate the human race from ignorance, poverty, division, sin and misery" (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 10).

Oakeshott convicted the rationalist of misplaced abstraction. The concrete experience of human life had been abridged into an encounter of power, ends and means, problems and solutions, skills and outcomes. The success of any enterprise, however, whether implementing a reform or teaching a class, depended crucially on who was doing it, and on characteristics of the actors that could not be captured in terms of this framework of abstraction.

A common response to Oakeshott's criticism was agreement that political abstraction could be dangerously misleading, coupled with a demand for a way of solving the problem. This was a response that illustrated exactly the cast of mind being criticized: There's no point in criticizing something unless you can suggest ways of improving it. In a rationalist world, things called problems are there to be solved.

In case this issue might seem remote from the projects of practical men, let me give one or two examples. For over a century now, the Labour Party in Britain has been irritated by an institutional excrescence called the House of Lords. It was undemocratic, elitist, an anachronism, so it had to be abolished. Most previous Labour governments grumbled about it but were wise enough to leave it at that. When Tony Blair came to power in 1997, he courageously grasped this nettle and his hand is still bleeding from it. He cannot retreat, but every advance brings trouble. Should the new body be elected? But then it might end up contesting legitimacy with the Commons, and thus deadlocking the constitution. Should it be a nominated body? But then it would become a source of corrupt patronage. The problem now shuttles between committees and commissions. Another example: Many Australians have long been irritated by having Queen Elizabeth, who lives on the other side of the world, as the Queen of Australia. They have cherished the project of changing the name of "Governor General" (who is the effective ceremonial head of state and has for a long time consistently been an Australian nominated by the Australian government) to "President." It sounds so simple, indeed inevitable. In a referendum in 1999, however, the Australian people threw out this luminous idea. Again, the problem resulted from misunderstanding the coherent interrelationship of political institutions. The role of Governor General could not be changed without creating unacceptable problems elsewhere. Both of these examples illustrate another general idea that is powerfully elaborated in Oakeshott's understanding of politics, namely that every institution belongs to a closely knit system, so that a change in one part will resonate throughout the whole.

I would imagine that American projects for the control of campaign finance might raise similar questions.

These cases might suggest that Oakeshott's value to political scientists would be as a mine detector, advising caution to the promoters of harebrained schemes. You can do almost anything with a body of prose, but this particular use would certainly defy another of Oakeshott's central theses, namely that there is no logical move from an abstract philosophical proposition (even a skeptical one) to any specific course of action. One example of this nonconnection is Oakeshott's denial that the suffragette movement was logically derived from the doctrine of the rights of man. How can you get from the rights of "man" to the right of women to vote? The answer is that you must press on the standard ambiguity of the term "man" so that it ceases to refer to males and takes in all human beings. The argument for enfranchising women then becomes as strong, or as weak, as the general argument for rights. But that raises the question of why it never occurred to most men, at least before Mary Wollstonecraft, to include votes for women among the rights of man. And the answer Oakeshott suggests is that the actual political status of women coheres with the rest of life, and that it was not until the eighteenth century that changes were taking place in the social and legal position of women in Britain (and in other countries) that made their exclusion from a universal franchise look increasingly odd. This perceived incoherence in political arrangements "intimated" a reform. Oakeshott sometimes expresses the point by suggesting that politics is "the pursuit of intimations." (For a criticism of Oakeshott's argument that every action involves unrecognized assumptions, see Munro 1974.)

This became a famous phrase in the wake of Oakeshott's inaugural lecture "Political Education" in 1951 (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], pp. 43–69). Nice word, "intimations." It refers to something indicated or notified, but what Oakeshott means by it is something a little like "a gap in the market." In political life, old issues go dead and new ones acquire resonance for a whole variety of reasons. Even in making this simple suggestion, Oakeshott was pursued by rationalist misunderstandings, and I have seen textbooks reporting that he argued that politics ought to be the pursuit of intimations. That would make no sense. The point of the formula is basically negative: It means that political reforms cannot, for logical reasons, be deduced from ideals or ideologies, and any claim that a project has been so derived is part of its justification rather than its generation.

THE CHARACTER OF POLITICS

These ideas were given a classic expression in Oakeshott's inaugural lecture "Political Education" at the London School of Economics (LSE). It had a dialectical structure and discussed how political knowledge might be taught. Politics he defined as "attending to the general arrangements of a set of people whom chance or choice has brought together," and he was careful to insist that it did not consist of "making arrangements," for the simple reason that the arrangements peoples have

inherited always vastly exceed those that anyone might propose to change, even in the most revolutionary situation. This might sound like a rather devious way of being conservative, and Oakeshott was indeed tagged as such, but the real meaning of the point, as comes out clearly throughout the lecture, is that any human activity such as politics must be understood as “concrete and self-moving.” A project for even the most radical change can come from nowhere else but the actual life of the society in which it is proposed, for so long as any proposal seems to be merely an idea emerging from nowhere and being applied to, or imposed on, a society, then we have an encounter of abstractions rather than an understanding of something “concrete and self-moving.”

The first candidate for a general characterization of politics is that it consists in responding directly to whatever situation might arise—one meaning of the term empiricism. Such a view might possibly be approximated by an oriental despot whom we might conceive as ruling by whim, but otherwise it could only be found in the impulsiveness of the asylum. Responsiveness of this impulsive kind cannot enter deliberation without some element of reflectiveness that can, as Oakeshott says, put this responsiveness to work. A plausible answer might then be that politics can appear as a self-moved manner of activity when empiricism is preceded and guided by a general doctrine, an ideology. Equipped with his guide, like a cook with a cookbook, the ruler can proceed to solve the problems of government.

This view—that politics is the application to the world of a theory or ideology—might solve the problem, and is certainly a common account of political action. But what is an ideology? It is an abstract theory of political life, and Oakeshott emphasizes the fact that it is premeditated. That is to say, it purports to be ready before the situations to which it will be applied have arisen. It purports, after all, to be a pronouncement of reason. In this sense, liberalism as a guide to later politics had been premeditated by Locke, Mill, and others, and the Bolsheviks set to work on Russia with the *Communist Manifesto* as their guide. Ideas of rights, democracy, racial purity, or happiness might all function in this way as handbooks to successful rule. Lenin came to power not as someone immersed in Russian politics, but as an outsider bent on transforming Russian life in terms of a supposedly universal scheme. It might seem, then, that in the conjunction of empiricism (the impulse to act) and an ideology (a plan of action) one might have found “a concrete manner of activity” (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 47).

We haven't, of course, because we have mistaken the character of an ideology. Its independence, its premeditation, and its universal character all are illusory, for every ideology emerges by reflection on the manner in which some people or other have actually conducted their politics. Oakeshott (1991 [1962], p. 53) observes that Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, which was interpreted in France, America, and elsewhere as a statement of abstract principles to be put into practice, was not so much a prelude as a postscript—“here, set down in abstract terms, is a brief conspectus of the manner in which Englishmen were accustomed to go about the business of attending to their arrangements—a brilliant abridgement of the political habits of Englishmen.” What we may call a “politics of the book” is

thus based on the illusion that it proceeds from reason, when in fact such politics is guided by a digest, or as Oakeshott insists, an “abridgement” of some concrete and specific form of experience (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 51). He develops the point by arguing that a scientist exploring a hypothesis is not essentially different. It is not the hypothesis that sets a scientist to work but immersion in the scientific tradition that enables him to formulate and pursue a hypothesis. Similarly, a cookbook is not the thing that sets a cook to work, but the result of someone’s skill in cooking. What we do, and moreover what we want to do, is the creature of how we are accustomed to conduct our affairs. But there is a further problem: An abstract model offered in politics may have been abstracted from some activity other than politics (the manufacturing industry, for example, or monastic life), and hence it may be inappropriate to its purpose—a feature, Oakeshott suggests, of Marxism as an ideology.

This line of argument helps us understand what Oakeshott means by rationalism. The political reflections of Hobbes or Locke or Rousseau begin as more or less philosophical understandings that tell us about the character of political life. As such, they are a sign of a vigorous political life. They are like caricatures that reveal the dominant features of something. The problem begins when these reflections or caricatures are mistaken for instruments of political action. Some handbooks, indeed, are intended for just that purpose, but no writing in these various idioms can be more than an abridgement of the concrete political tradition, and Oakeshott’s central theme is that *la verite reste dans les nuances*. Abstraction selects, and a caricature can never be a criterion (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 58). This whole argument is a good example of Oakeshott’s preoccupation with the way in which the meaning of a proposition depends on its mode, context, or function. In the twentieth century, no part of the world was safe from sorcerer’s apprentices mistaking caricatures of political skill for the secrets of social transformation, escaping from the libraries, and taking over whole countries with their often brutish fantasies. Totalitarian societies merely had this disease in its extreme form.

We thus need a third term if we are to arrive at our goal. “In politics, the only concrete manner of activity detectable is one in which empiricism and the ends to be pursued are recognized as dependent, alike for their existence and their operation, upon a traditional manner of behavior” (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 56). Politics is an activity that springs neither from instant desires nor from general principles but from the tradition itself. “And the form it takes, because it can take no other, is the amendment of existing arrangements by exploring and pursuing what is intimated in them.” A tradition incorporates what Oakeshott calls “a flow of sympathy” for much that does not fully appear. In other words, any present idea of the political tradition will almost certainly omit elements that are discoverable only if the tradition develops over a long period. This is one of the reasons why Oakeshott thinks that the best form of political education consists in an immersion in its history. No such immersion, however, will supply a “mistake-proof” apparatus that will guard against misjudgment.

We thus have a contrast between the contemporary idea that we can learn politics from books and apply the ideas we encounter in order to solve current problems, on the one hand, and the idea that political developments emerge from a tradition, on the other. Books may formulate such illuminating abstractions as pure community, democracy, natural rights, the progress of civilization, or whatever can be successfully commended to a sufficient number of people. But the politician who imagines that such conscious ideas are the full explanation of his conduct is mistaken. Something else is also present, and “tradition” is the broadest name for it. Tradition may take the form of moral convictions so entrenched in a culture that they appear to the actor as unquestionable reality. The term tradition causes a problem here because confused readers are likely to think that Oakeshott is recommending tradition, whereas the basic point of the argument is that some element of this kind is inescapable. Those who think they are following the dictates of reason or science are merely following hunches or intimations basically determined by convictions arising within the tradition, just as (according to Keynes) lunatics apparently distilling their frenzies from the air are actually the puppets of some long-dead thinker. Oakeshott’s argument is not, of course, a claim to understand anyone’s unconscious motives but an inference from the logic of abstraction. Hitler had an idea about racial purity, but no such idea alone generated the Holocaust, any more than the mere reading of Marx caused Pol Pot to take the Cambodian people back to the Year Zero.

It is only the careless reader, then, who would judge Oakeshott a conservative because of his use of the idea of tradition in the writings of this middle period, but Oakeshott, always alert to avoidable kinds of misjudgment, later left tradition behind and preferred to talk in terms of a practice. In the inaugural lecture, however, he made clear his skeptical (and perhaps pessimistic) view of human life in describing political activity as sailing a “boundless and bottomless sea” without either harbor or destination (Oakeshott 1991 [1962]). It is a passage so well known that I need not quote it here, but for those who imagine that politics is the activity of building a better society, this passage induced a challenging sense of sheer disorientation.

POLITICS AND EDUCATION

In the 1950s, Oakeshott did engage with the idea of conservatism by considering its identity as one disposition among others in modern politics. It is true that his own inclinations were sympathetic to the disposition he described, but it remains a solecism to characterize him as a “conservative philosopher.” In his essay “On Being Conservative,” he was emphatic that being a conservative in politics is entirely compatible with being radical in any and every other sphere of life. Indeed, the history of Britain and America, countries that combine technological and social inventiveness with conservative politics, might well seem a practical vindication of this distinction. It is no less plausible in its negative form, where one juxtaposes

the supposedly radical politics of the Soviet Union with its remarkable lack of radicalism and inventiveness in every other field. Few things are more reactionary than a revolution. How can you possibly justify changing perfection?

It was characteristic of Oakeshott's character that he should have gone on developing his political understanding in new forms throughout his life. As early as 1923, he had expressed his dissatisfaction with political science in Cambridge. He thought it lacked any overarching concept that might save its political concerns from being a mere assemblage of information and theories of processes in terms of interests or holders of power. As an idealist in philosophy, his concern was always with the coherence between an object of study and its context, and what seemed feeble to him about the political science of the period was its complete lack of a theory of the state. No doubt it can be illuminating to talk about the monopoly of force or the "authoritative allocation of values," but it hardly saves politics from being understood as merely one thing after another. But what was the object of investigation? What kind of thing was the state? Clearly, it was an association of some kind—but what?

In the 1950s, Oakeshott came back to the questions that had provoked the rationalism material and wrote a long manuscript, not published in his lifetime, about European politics as moving between two "polarities," which he called "the politics of perfection and the politics of scepticism" (Oakeshott 1996). The politics of perfection is a reconfiguration of what he had earlier treated as rationalism, though here he insisted that it was a necessary part of the tradition and certainly not to be discarded as a mistake. The interesting thing, given that the politics of perfection seems so clearly to most modern readers nothing less than a sensible attitude to politics, is to discover whence Oakeshott derives the politics of skepticism. And the answer may be taken to illustrate that otherwise possibly opaque point I have mentioned about a political tradition being a flow of sympathy "for what does not fully appear" (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 57).

Oakeshott derives (if that is not too brutish a word for a subtle argument) the disposition to be skeptical about the possibilities of political control of society from the fact that in medieval England, political activity largely took the form of a judicial process, and Parliament itself had the basic character of a judicial institution rather than a legislature until about the time when the Tudors became fluent legislators (Oakeshott 1996, p. 68 ff.) It never entirely lost this character. A judicial process supplies what Locke was later to call "umpirage" in disputes, and it largely limits itself to the question at hand, and thus is not tempted (as legislation in the idiom of the politics of perfection generally is) to foreclose future possibilities. This is a point arguably relevant to contemporary proposals, on ideological grounds, to reform the House of Lords and to abolish the politico-judicial role of the Lord Chancellor.

It was also in the 1950s that Oakeshott considered, although in a rather oblique way, politics as a science. "The Study of Politics in a University" (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], pp. 184–218) was, however, more a contribution to educational theory than a view of political science in the strict sense. As always with Oakeshott, we

find a complex mapping of a large field; he always, as it were, begins with a long shot and slowly zooms in on his subject. His concern is with the way in which the young are initiated into their civilizational inheritance, first at the primary stage, when that initiation takes the form of games and activities, and then in schools, where they learn possibly useful things whose point they may well not recognize at the time. This is not, I think, one of Oakeshott's better essays, perhaps because he is circling around a subject that rather embarrasses him. He limits himself to the question of how an undergraduate in a British university encounters politics.

On leaving school, a "momentous occasion," the pupil will face two different forms of education, which Oakeshott specifies as vocational and academic. From one point of view, a civilization is a collection of skills that make possible a current way of living, and hence vocational education is "borrowing an appropriate quantum of the total capital and learning to use it in such a manner that it earns an interest. . ." (Oakeshott 1991, p. 191). In elucidating these remarks, Oakeshott introduces a distinction between a language, which he takes to model a manner of thinking, and a literature or text, by which he means what has been expressed in the language. In vocational education, the pupil is being introduced to a text: The skill lies in acquiring the information rather than in speaking the language. University education, by contrast, is an education in languages, and the languages studied are explanatory rather than prescriptive. He specifies a university as

. . .an association of persons, locally situated, engaged in caring for and attending to the whole intellectual capital which composes a civilization. It is concerned not merely to keep an intellectual inheritance intact, but to be continuously recovering what has been lost, restoring what has been neglected, collecting together what has been dissipated, repairing what has been corrupted, reconsidering, reshaping, reorganizing, making more intelligible, reissuing and reinvesting. (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 194)

There is no room here for the modern conception of a university as the intellectual powerhouse of society, whose business is to facilitate prosperity and productivity. Indeed, in principle, there is no concern with practice at all. Oakeshott knew, of course, that many places called universities bore little resemblance to this account, but this merely meant that they were institutions of a different kind. But in Oakeshott's view, a vigorous civilization must somewhere have institutions that are attending to its intellectual capital.

This complex mapping of education in order to locate education in politics makes a number of notable revisions to conventional opinion. One of its implications is that the pupil progressing from school to university is moving on to more advanced forms of knowledge. This is why universities are often, crudely, identified with "higher education." Oakeshott's view is that the activities of undergraduates are less advanced than what is taught in schools because they are more reflective. Schools, at least the British schools of his time, taught a range of subjects to a reasonably high level. Pupils acquired some grasp of languages, history, literature, mathematics, science, and a few technical things such as physical training

and perhaps carpentry. On leaving school for university, however, undergraduates learned to reflect on the languages with which they were already acquainted. This might be done in one of two ways. It might happen in schools of science, history, or philosophy; alternatively, it might, on the pattern of Greats at Oxford, study a literature in order to encounter a range of “languages” as paradigms. A university education differed both from that of school and from vocational studies because it was basically concerned with languages rather than with a literature.

How does politics fit into this scheme? So far as school is concerned, politics may be commended as an introduction to an activity that is almost universal in our societies; beyond this, there is obviously a need for vocational training for those going into administration or perhaps those who merely want to be politically sophisticated—information about cabinet committees and parties such as might be necessary for both professional and civic purposes. As Oakeshott (1991 [1962], p. 202) puts it, “On the face of it there is no reason why one should not undertake to teach politics as one might undertake to teach plumbing, ‘home-making’, librarianship, farming or how to run a bassoon factory; and this teaching is, in fact, undertaken.”

Juxtaposing these remarks with the claims often made for political science, one can hardly resist the conclusion that irony is at work. Federalism, second chambers, elites, parties and pressure groups, etc.—all of these things may be studied, and Oakeshott recognizes that although such study “outdistances in intellectual content (and sometimes in unengaged general interest) the technical literature concerned, for example, with building houses or growing tomatoes,” the disproportion is not overwhelming and the design is the same (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 203).

Oakeshott’s disdain is particularly evident as he observes that the development of vocational teaching of politics has led to the idea that political studies is a kind of “master science” that the world needs in solving its problems. Oakeshott quotes with a certain glee some of the more implausible claims made on behalf of this master science, for example, that it would “throw some light on the great problems of our times: such as the problem of avoiding war, of increasing international peace and security, of extending freedom, of assisting the development of backward countries, of preventing the exploitation of native races, of using government as a means of raising living standards and promoting prosperity, of banishing ignorance, squalor, destitution and disease through the social services, of increasing welfare, happiness and the dignity of mankind. . . .” And it goes on! It is clear that the study of politics long suffered from the inflated claims made for it, but this is incidental to Oakeshott; his chief concern is that even in this inflated form, politics would still be a vocational study and therefore unsuitable for universities.

He does consider, however, that there is one form in which politics might suitably be studied in an academic manner. It would be an immersion in the two relevant explanatory languages or modes of understanding: history and philosophy. “What falls outside these is, I think, one or other of these manners of thinking disguised in some not very elegant fancy dress” (Oakeshott 1991 [1962], p. 212). One implication of this view is that the undergraduate study of government should

focus on those countries that have generated a suitable literature—the English-speaking world, France, Sweden, etc. It should not at this level concern itself with government in such countries as the Soviet Union or China, about which virtually nothing is known with confidence. Such phenomena may be studied by graduates and teachers, of course, but they lack the developed character necessary to being a “language” suitable for education.

SCIENCE AND HISTORY

It is clear that Oakeshott was not a great admirer of the project of a science of politics, and we now need to go into the basic ground of this judgment. It is important to recognize that he was not in the least concerned to prescribe what should be done. He was concerned with categories, not evaluations. He was of course exploring a familiar logical fork: You can be scientific about things in the human world, but you will have left politics behind; alternatively, you can study politics, but you will not generate anything that could be called a science. His concern appears clearly if we look to his view of causes in history (O’Sullivan 2000, ch. 4). Everyone, including historians themselves, uses the language of causes, but in Oakeshott’s view of history, “causes” can only be a convenient word referring to a set of relevant circumstances (Oakeshott 1983). What does a historian do, for example, with an expression such as “the causes of the First World War”? Might we look to great power rivalry, French resentment over Alsace-Lorraine, German fears and ambitions, instability in the Balkans, the arms race, colonial rivalries, and so on? We can indeed look to these and no doubt many other things, often formalized in school history as “factors” or “causes” of the outbreak of war in 1914—an event also equipped with a “trigger,” namely the assassination of the Archduke in Sarajevo. But even if we were to construe “cause” in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, we would still be at a loss about how to assign importance to these elements in the explanation of what happened. There can be no evidenced answer discriminating the weight of one “cause” from another. The only historical explanation of the event lies in assembling and recounting the immensely complex circumstances that led to the First World War and then to its aftermath and so on. The LSE Oakeshott archive includes a long paper that exemplifies this thesis in terms of the War of Austrian Succession of 1739–1748.

Of course, one can treat passages of the past in other ways. One might be concerned with the general question of what causes wars, in which case wars lose their specificity and become case studies. The First World War, for example, becomes a complex instance of the explanandum “war,” and earlier events are repackaged as factors constituting the explanans. Mobilizing the circumstances into neatly drilled factors, however, leads to distortion. The complicated circumstances of German aspirations after empire and French and British clashes in Africa are turned into “colonial rivalry,” the building of Dreadnoughts into the “arms race,” and so on. But by what process of translation does one turn a circumstance into a cause?

Ideally, science leads to ideas that allow quantification of its elements. A theory of deadly quarrels can certainly be developed, and quantitative values assigned to its elements, but the trick lies in assimilating circumstances to a schema without distortion, and that is where Oakeshott's doubts set in. And there is the further point that complex human events are being assimilated to a method developed to investigate the workings of nature, workings from whose "innerness" we are inevitably excluded.

This kind of theorizing can be done, has been done, and may be of practical and theoretical interest. However, in Oakeshott's view it has, by the logic of the disciplines involved, excluded history, which operates on a different logic and yields different insights. In history, we must assemble from the records available to us the set of relevant circumstances that make the events intelligible to us (Oakeshott 1983, pp. 95–96). Science generates hard stuff called "explanation," whereas history might be said merely to yield "intelligibilities" or understandings of what has happened. Laws connect events in the scientific world, and hypotheses (true or false) yield demonstrative conclusions (which may of course be probabilistic as well as demonstrative).

History knows nothing of these law-like regularities. All is contingency. No historical relationship is necessary, and no historical trend inevitable. The essence of history, one might say, is human beings responding to each other in complicated ways. The contrast is between a causal relationship and a contingent one. A causal relationship is one in which, given the set of necessary and sufficient conditions (the inflammable liquid, the match, the air, etc.), the effect follows necessarily. The necessity, of course, belongs to the law, and what actually happens may be another matter.

HUMAN CONDUCT AND MECHANICAL DETERMINATION

In the 1970s, Oakeshott rethought his account of the human world and the result was *On Human Conduct*, in which, characteristically, he went back to basics (Oakeshott 1975). The witty and elegant style of earlier writings gave way to a difficult but masterly compression, and it is here that the reason for his view of the limitation of political science becomes unmistakable: Human life is a succession of contingencies, and the appropriate mode in which it may be grasped is historical. The image he had often used to convey this judgment was that of the conversation of mankind. In conversation, the response to a remark is a speech act stimulated unpredictably by that specific remark. It can only be understood in terms of the previous utterance but does not follow logically from it. As contingent responses to particular situations, human acts and utterances are essentially contextual. Meaning alone gives the key, and no human action in its concreteness is governed by natural laws. Oakeshott sometimes illustrated the point by adopting the distinction between a blink, which is a physiological reaction, and a wink, which is a human action whose meaning lies in the response it seeks to elicit. To invoke causality transforms

a material into a process, which is to remove it from the human world. The “science” in political science is thus only tolerable if it signifies the Latin idea of *scientia*, rather than the demonstrative character (hypothetically demonstrative as Oakeshott thought of it) of science.

On Human Conduct (Oakeshott 1975) consists of three essays. The first discusses the theorizing of human conduct, the second elaborates the civil condition, and the third explicates the character of a modern European state (Auspitz 1976). An alert reader will already observe that this interesting set of topics entirely omits the terms “politics” and “society,” and a word about the reasons for this will clear our path. By the time he came to write these essays, Oakeshott felt that “politics” was a word so lacking in any precise specification that it had become useless for denoting the conduct of the public business. He recognized, of course, that the boundaries of the term had always been porous, and that eccentric circumstances might on occasion bring anything from sex to theology into the realm of politics. Now, however, in a time when the personal was claimed to be the political, and democracy might demand anything of its rulers, the term had entirely lost specification. He preferred to retreat to the less vulgarized Latin vocabulary.

“Society” suffered from similar problems. It referred to some “alleged totality of human relationships.” Such a totality cannot be understood as a genuinely human complex because it is too vast; it is therefore represented as a “system,” and hence as a process to be understood in terms of its causal regularities (Oakeshott 1975, p. 24). Any theory of the supposed components of this system must therefore deny the essential character of human conduct. On these grounds, Oakeshott judged that sociology (which he thought ought to be a study of the structure of practices) had taken a notable wrong turn. The same considerations applied to a good deal of political science.

Our question of precisely why Oakeshott rejected political science thus turns on clarifying how he thought the human world must be theorized. Let us return to the basics. Political science concerns itself with voters, activists, bureaucrats, rulers, etc., and also with classes, interests, elites, and so on. For a philosopher, all of this takes too much for granted. What are all these things made of? Oakeshott’s answer is that experience recognizes what he calls “goings-on” in terms of the marks and characteristics by which we find our way about the world. Some of these “goings-on” are recognized as natural (trees falling, waves crashing on a shore, etc.), whereas others are recognized as human doings (a friend waving, a knock on the door, etc.). Human conduct is what is postulated when we recognize goings-on as acts of agents. These marks and characteristics are organized and developed into patterns that Oakeshott calls “ideal characters.” “Human conduct” is an abstract term that covers the doings of intelligent agents acting on the basis of “imagined and wished-for” satisfactions (Oakeshott 1975, p. 41). What people do, in other words, depends on what they imagine their situation to be, and how they respond to their perceived situation largely depends on the range of their possible imaginings. It is this fact that carries human conduct beyond the range of reliable predictability. Any occurrence construed as a human act must be an exhibition of

intelligence, however remarkable some of these self-understandings may be. An agent is, Oakeshott tells us, what he understands, or misunderstands, himself to be.

It is important to grasp the range of this view and its limits. The actuary and the Pavlovian psychologist can certainly study human beings in their different ways, but they are not studying human conduct; the actuary merely studies abstract probabilities, and the Pavlovian studies physiological reactions such as blinks. Because humans are both organisms and instances of collectivities, such studies certainly tell us something about ourselves, but they do not belong in the area of human conduct. Nor are we in the area of freedom of the will or other such questions of metaphysics. Oakeshott is concerned with the place of interpretation as the basis of the human world [a point excellently elaborated by Nardin (2001)]. Everything we understand depends on the (often implicit) questions we ask. In the childhood of the human race, Oakeshott observes, the understanding of human conduct was so little thought to be an achievement that nearly everything—rivers, trees, meteorology, etc.—was understood in this way. By contrast, we may add, a technologically sophisticated modern world tends to understand whatever seems even minimally susceptible to such treatment in terms of causal regularities. But to follow this latter path, as political science tends to do, is to drain the intelligence and human character out of the human world.

Oakeshott's phenomenology of human conduct exhibits the human world as an ascent from barely differentiated materials to a variety of more sophisticated kinds of knowledge, which Oakeshott calls "conditional platforms of understanding." "Goings-on," identified in terms of characteristics, compose patterns of understanding that constitute the world we inhabit. They are often related to each other as signs—black clouds signifying the likelihood of rain, to use a Hobbesian example. The marks or characteristics we identify can be compared so as to yield generalizations on the same platform of conditional understanding, but might, if we choose, be abstracted into ideal characters whose theorizing generates what we may recognize as a science. Each of these platforms can yield its own harvest of insight and has its own limits. One may, for example, turn to examine these theories according to what is postulated by the ideal conditions in question, a conceptual inquiry that leads into philosophy. Oakeshott illustrates the process by the Augustinian distinction between asking "What is the time?" and asking "What is time?" "Human conduct" is itself a postulate of this kind; one cannot "do" human conduct because it stands for the ideal character postulated by our understanding of agency. All of these moves constitute a form of ascent toward greater abstraction, and such an ascent loses in specificity what it gains in explanatory power. As Oakeshott remarks, expressing one of his most entrenched convictions, "The irony of all theorising is its propensity to generate, not an understanding, but a not-yet understood" (Oakeshott 1975, p. 11).

This account of how we come to understand the world better is explicitly Platonic, with one notable variation (Nardin 2001, p. 87). Oakeshott is adamant that you can ascend toward the heights of knowledge but you cannot descend in the

same way. Philosophy is a form of understanding, but a philosophical proposition cannot logically become a practical instrument for changing the world. Indeed, it is precisely the mistake of the rationalist not to understand this point, and Oakeshott in *On Human Conduct* has some harsh words to say about the “theoretician” or ideologist who imagines it to be possible (Oakeshott 1975, p. 26). The point is that the propositions of philosophy have no reference in the contingent world of marks and characteristics, and hence any attempt to “apply” them is at the mercy of beliefs and convictions of another order of things altogether. From Rousseau to the Committee of Public Safety is a fatal journey in which the traveler cannot but lose his way. He misunderstood what he thought he had learned, just as Marx did in converting Hegel into political prophecy. Oakeshott will have nothing to do with those intellectual war-crimes trials so popular in the mid-twentieth century, in which Plato and other philosophers were arraigned as the progenitors of Hitler and Stalin (Popper 1945). And it is on the basis of this essential logical point that he would make a plea for the defense of any philosophy in the dock.

Let us return to Oakeshott’s account of how we theorize human conduct. Among the ideal characters generated by human activity he includes deliberation and persuasion. Deliberation is a form of intelligence; the agent interrogates the possibilities of a situation that, like any human situation, is circumscribed only by “the virtuosity of his imagination.” It is thus not to be understood by analogy with, say, chess, in which the possibilities are fixed (Oakeshott 1975, p. 43). The alternatives the agent has to consider are his own inventions. Hobbes describes the will as the last appetite in deliberation, but Oakeshott takes Nietzsche’s view of these powers of the mind (will, desire, ends, means, and other such entities): Human experience is a continuous and concrete flow of responses to a changing world. The will is not a supervening entity standing above the willed act; it is nothing but intelligence in deliberation (Nietzsche 1996 [1887], pp. 29–30). The meaning of an action, he tells us (Oakeshott 1975, p. 44), is “a wished for response from other agents” and “acting is making a bargain with an imperfectly imagined future.”

Persuasion is a further postulate of human conduct “designed to diminish the hazards of action.” Here we are dealing with what Oakeshott calls “conduct inter homines,” a term he uses in order to avoid any version of “society,” to which confusions stick like burrs to wool. As one follows these inventive and ingenious terms, it is hard not to think of Oakeshott as a hygienist in a white coat trying to bring a little rational order to a world of scruffy and careless technicians. He is emphatic that the considerations involved in deliberation on the one hand and persuasion on the other are quite different. “The difference lies in the audience. . . persuasive argument is designed to convince others of what the speaker has already convinced himself in respect of its merits, or at least of what he has convinced himself that he wishes to convince others” (Oakeshott 1975, p. 48). The political scientist is perfectly familiar with the idea that the rhetorician may not be disclosing his “real” reason for recommending a course of action, but here in Oakeshott what for the political scientist is cynicism surfaces as part of the logic of human action.

A phenomenology builds up a structure of cognition from the bottom to the top by progressive inclusion of more complex considerations. Oakeshott had first been concerned with more or less ad hoc relations between individuals, who are for this purpose understood in terms of the postulates agency, choice, performance, and response, and what they are doing is negotiating bargains with the future. But these encounters also postulate more durable relationships between agents, which Oakeshott calls practices. A practice is “a relationship between agents articulated in terms of specific conditional prescriptions” (Oakeshott 1975, p. 56).

A practice is thus constituted of rules and they come in an immense variety of forms, all of them subject to change as a result of the play of circumstances. You do not “obey” a rule (any more than you obey a law); you “subscribe” to it. This is a subtle discussion, and for current purposes I need mention only two features of it. Oakeshott wants to navigate his way around the fact that in a sense every practice, even the most academic philosophy, is practical, because the author seeks to have some effect. But the threat of everything turning out to be essentially practical can be avoided by insisting that “practical” simply signifies “conduct in respect of its acknowledgment of a practice,” rather than a special sort of concern to change the world. A practice is a “language of self-disclosure which can be spoken only by agents” (Oakeshott 1975, pp. 57–58). It is essentially adverbial; that is to say, you cannot just “perform a practice.” It arises in the course of doing a substantive something else. One of the best examples of a practice is speaking an actual language, in which we seek to communicate with others on the basis of a common subscription to the rules and vocabulary of that language.

One particular practice is of central importance, and that is morality. Oakeshott has an essentially dualistic view of the moral life as being that aspect of conduct in which the agent both “discloses” himself by revealing his wishes and concerns, and “enacts” himself by doing so in a manner consistent with his sense of his own character and identity. Self-enactment postulates a sentiment in terms of which the agent expresses and reveals himself. This account of morality has no concern with prescribing norms or promoting any particular mode of life. It is simply an account of one peculiarly central practice that Oakeshott deems inseparable from agency.

Running through this account of human conduct, its leitmotif, so to speak, is a continuous attention to alternative explanations that would, as it were, “dehumanize” the material being characterized. In discussing persuasion, for example, Oakeshott remarks that it is easily distinguished from “attempts to secure acquiescence by hypnotic suggestion, electrical shocks, chemical injections, physical deprivations etc., all of which deny agency to the subject by denying understanding. Again, since human conduct is a relationship between agents, it cannot be a genetic relationship, nor be based on psychological urges or tendencies such as gregariousness. Such explanations, whatever value they may or may not have, are categorical denials of agency.”

Here then is the problem with political science, strictly so called. The political scientist is forever trying to construe winks as blinks, and embedding them in a

structure of causes that aspires to be demonstrative explanation, even if only in terms of probabilities, which themselves have a demonstrative character. The drive is always to abstract out from politics that element in which human intelligence is exhibited. Such hypotheses as that democracies never go to war with each other or that voters will always reelect a government presiding over economic prosperity all belong to what one might vulgarly call an intelligence-free zone of understanding. Any rationality they may claim is abstract rather than the reason implicit in the situational responses individuals actually make to the world in their everyday lives.

POLITICS AS PART OF THE HUMAN WORLD

We need not go into these questions, because our basic concern is merely to bring out the contrast between science and the historical understanding that Oakeshott judged is the only explanatory mode that can recognize agency in human conduct. The reason is that it is only in historical understanding (aside from practice) that we may find agency as an intelligible response to circumstances. An “intelligible response” is essentially situational, and hence rational choice theory and other such formalizations of practice do not qualify because they have leveled out the imaginative element of an individual response. The logical point is that science can recognize only two kinds of relationship: the law-like (including probability) and the accidental, in which only temporal proximity connects the items being considered. In positivist terms, only necessity explains, and chance is a challenge to find the hidden law. In the human world, no human response is necessary but all are, in Oakeshott’s view, “contingent.” The word contingency is sometimes used for chance or fortuitous connections, but as Oakeshott uses it, the term designates an intelligible connection between related circumstances (Oakeshott 1983, p. 45; cf. O’Sullivan 2003, 236 ff.) He sought to focus our attention on human responses which, not being necessitated nor indeed purely fortuitous, may be called contingent and can be understood in their own terms. Blinks may be necessitated, but winks emerge intelligibly, not necessarily, from what we may call (though Oakeshott certainly would not) a social context. Hence Oakeshott’s great image of the human condition is that of conversation. The human world is a vast arena in which people are acting and speaking in response to one another. For that reason, it cannot be theorized as an outcome of natural laws.

Political scientists are keen on theorizing something called “the political process” and to explore “the political system.” Oakeshott would not deny that interesting things can be said under these rubrics, but to speak strictly, politics is not a process and the state is not a system, except that in both cases we have a structure of rules that may be investigated. In practical terms, generalizations are made and such inductions may well give us some purchase on reality for the moment; but they are precarious. Kant was wrong to think that a republican constitution guarantees peace, and although those who have generalized that democracies do not go to war with each other may indeed point to some inductive support, these

generalizations are too dependent on definitional adjustment to generate a law. Will prosperous voters dismiss a government in power? It is rare, no doubt, but elections are about many other things than prosperity. Is it the case that elites always rule in any kind of state? It depends on what you mean by an “elite” and what you count as “ruling.” Definitional ingenuity counts here far more than it does in natural science. These are in a sense elementary considerations, and few people would directly deny them, but the project of discovering a science to guide politics is so persuasive that it often casts their implications into the shade.

Oakeshott thought about these issues throughout his life, and there is no doubt that his is much the most sophisticated statement of this position in political philosophy. In *On Human Conduct*, he went on to analyze the state in terms that far transcend most analyses of freedom (Franco 1990), and in the third essay, “On the Character of a Modern European State,” an idiosyncratic account of the history of modern political thought, he posed a set of questions that he thought brought out the logic of political understanding more exactly than those we more commonly encounter. But that is not our present concern.

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WHAT DOES POLITICAL ECONOMY TELL US ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—AND VICE VERSA?*

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■ **Abstract** This essay reviews how three pillars of political economy—collective action, institutions, and political market imperfections—help us answer the following question: Why do some countries develop and not others? Each advances our understanding of who wins and who loses in government decision making, generally, but only a subset of this literature helps us answer the question. The study of political market imperfections strongly suggests that the lack of credibility of pre-electoral political promises and incomplete voter information are especially robust in explaining development outcomes. From the institutional literature, the most powerful explanation of contrasting development outcomes links political checks and balances to the credibility of government commitments.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of underdevelopment is in substantial measure one of government failure, and therefore political failure, in developing countries. A vast literature has illuminated the roles of interest groups, institutions, and political market imperfections in shaping the actions of government. However, there has been no systematic effort to establish how the political economy literature answers the question, “Why are some countries economically developed and others not?” This essay addresses this question.

Two government failures are the focus of this essay. One is the adoption of policies that unnecessarily leave most people in society worse off.¹ The other is

*The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this paper are entirely those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the World Bank, its Executive Directors, or the countries they represent.

¹“Unnecessarily” in the sense that Pareto-superior policies, which would have made some better off without making others worse off, could in principle have been adopted.

the inability to make credible promises to refrain from opportunistic behavior.² The first, policy inefficiency, has been examined using each of the three pillars of political economy analysis—collective action, institutions, and political market imperfections.

The theory of collective action rests on the hypothesis that organized groups of voters exert more pressure on politicians than do unorganized groups. This theory explains systematic policy failure in developing countries if special interests in poor countries are particularly well organized and antagonistic to broader development objectives. The second pillar focuses on the institutions that structure how politicians gain and retain power and determine who can propose or must approve policy change. Institutional differences account for differential development if the formal institutions of poor countries yield greater inefficiencies in policy making than formal institutions in rich countries. Finally, policy distortions may be driven by imperfections in political markets. These include the lack of voter information, the lack of credibility of pre-electoral political promises, the “all or nothing” nature of many political choices (such as the need to choose a single candidate to represent voter interests on multiple dimensions), and the polarization of the electorate across politically relevant dimensions. If these imperfections are more pronounced in less developed countries, they can explain differential development outcomes.

The second government failure—the inability to make credible commitments—handcuffs governments in numerous ways, from monetary policy to their ability to encourage investment. This literature tends to focus on the relative size and power of economic interests in a country; formal institutions, particularly the extent of political checks and balances and the voting franchise; and political market imperfections, particularly the inability of politicians to make credible pre-electoral promises. Researchers in this area, more than in any other, attempt to explain divergent experiences of economic development and argue explicitly that governments in poor countries are less able to make credible commitments.

This review sidesteps discussion of the determinants of policy efficiency in autocracies, simply because the literature on the political economy of democracies is far more advanced. However, the entire debate surrounding the sources of government credibility implicitly contrasts autocratic forms of government, which have no elections and no political checks and balances, with governments that exhibit these institutional features. Similarly, following the literature, the discussion

²The two failures are linked, since government credibility influences policy choice. Governments that know their promises regarding the future are not credible have less incentive to undertake policies that only bear fruit if citizens believe government promises regarding the future. A third significant category of government performance relates to redistribution and inequality. These enter the analysis below as a puzzle, because of the absence of massive redistribution in highly unequal countries where the poor majority can and do vote; and as an explanation, because a significant literature attributes the failure of some countries to develop precisely to initial conditions of significant inequality in society.

below relies heavily on cross-country statistical comparisons to make the case that particular political economy features do or do not promote development; but in arguing that electoral systems or interest group characteristics drive political behavior in particular ways, relatively more evidence is drawn from research in Latin America, where scholars have been especially active in linking formal institutions and political decision making. Finally, although the discussion here has implications for the political economy of reform, that large and important literature is not directly considered.

The conclusion of the essay is straightforward to foreshadow. All the strands of political economy analysis have dramatically improved our ability to understand the determinants of government decision making. Only a subset of the literature, however, so far offers a convincing explanation for development. Within the literature on institutions, analyses of checks and balances among political decision makers provide the most robust explanation. Analyses of imperfections in political markets, particularly information and pre-electoral credibility, offer another useful perspective on development. Other analytical levers from the political economy literature provide less help in understanding why some countries are developed and others are not.

VARIATIONS IN GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Countries exhibit enormous variation with respect to both their policy choices and their credibility. With respect to policy efficiency, taking into account per capita income, average secondary school enrollment in 154 countries in 1995 varied more than 100 percentage points from the minimum to the maximum.³ Enrollments in the top 25% of countries were more than 34% higher than in the bottom 25%. One commonly used measure of credibility is an indicator of the rule of law. On a six-point scale, again controlling for per capita income, the lowest-scoring 25% of countries scored more than one point below the best-performing quartile. Similarly, on a six-point scale, the most corrupt quartile of countries was more than 1.5 points more corrupt than the least corrupt quartile.⁴ Taking policy and credibility failures together, it is not surprising that from 1975 to 2000, income per capita in the fastest-growing quartile of countries grew more than two percentage

³That is, first ask: What is the policy we expect given the country's income? Then subtract the actual policy from the predicted policy. This difference or residual gives the policy of a country holding constant the effects of income. A positive residual means that actual policy is better than what one might have expected on the basis of income; a negative difference means that actual policy is worse.

⁴Income, growth, and school-enrollment data are from the *World Development Indicators* (World Bank 2003). Rule-of-law and corruption data are from Political Risk Services' *International Country Risk Guide* (unpublished data).

points per year faster than in the slowest-growing quartile—a difference that, by the year 2000, meant that the incomes per capita in the slower-growing quartile were more than 60% lower than they otherwise would have been.

One could argue that these discrepancies, even controlling for income, are outside government control. Many factors enter into school enrollments that are unrelated to government policy; this is even more true with respect to growth. However, again controlling for income per capita, the top quartile of countries spent more than seven percentage points more on education, as a fraction of total government spending, than did the lowest-spending quartile (World Bank 2003). It may not be surprising, therefore, that if one simply correlates growth across countries and asks how poor countries are doing relative to rich countries, one finds that divergence between the two groups is increasing (Pritchett 1997). These differences are a core puzzle of the social sciences.

Collective Action: Economic Interests and the Shaping of Government Policy

Why are some economic interests better able to impose their preferences on government policy than others? Olson (1965) answered this question by arguing that those economic interests least able to overcome collective action problems in order to project their demands on politicians are most likely to bear the costs of political decision making. The influence of a group depends not only on the economic gain or loss that a group might incur from government action but also on the group's size and organizational ability. Hardin (1982) further elaborates on this theme to analyze the informational and other barriers to collective action.

The notion that economic interests affect policy has been a mainstay of research into policy change in the United States. McGuire & Ohsfeldt (1986) find that slaveholding voters at state-level constitutional assemblies resisted constitutional provisions that gave greater authority to the national government and, thereby, to the majority nonslaveholding northern states. Romer & Weingast (1991) show that congressional votes concerning the U.S. savings and loan crisis were significantly determined by whether legislators' voting districts—the key institutional variable—were dominated by solvent or insolvent thrift institutions. In his analysis of congressional action regarding various international financial crises, Broz (2002) finds that legislators from districts with many low-skilled workers were most likely to oppose international financial bailouts (e.g., loans to Mexico to stave off its default). His research suggests that emergency responses to international crisis that appear driven by executive-branch decision making are in fact not at all insulated from the usual factors of legislative politics. Kroszner & Strahan (1999) address the puzzle of a change in a regulatory status quo that had persisted for decades: the prohibition against branch banking. Small banks had long opposed laws that allowed large banks to set up branches. Kroszner & Strahan link the sudden softening of this opposition to a technological innovation, namely the introduction of automated teller machines.

Bates (1981) pioneered the application of collective action theory to policy outcomes in developing countries. He links agricultural policies in some African countries—a mix of harsh price controls on agricultural outputs administered by monopsony marketing boards and generous direct and indirect subsidies on imported agricultural inputs—precisely to the differential influence of interest groups on politicians. In contrast to the work in American politics, he focuses on the characteristics of the interest groups themselves. He argues that these policies can be traced directly to the loose organization of the mass of small farmers who use few of the imported inputs; to the successful collective action of relatively few large farmers to receive input subsidies that offset the price controls; and to the need to subsidize food purchases of urban residents because of the relative ease with which they can be mobilized politically in opposition to the government. This and other contributions, in both developed and developing countries, leave little doubt that organized interest groups have significant advantages in the making of policy.

Research based on the theory of collective action has seldom asked why some countries consistently pursue more welfare-enhancing policies than others. Three possibilities nevertheless emerge from Olson's work.

One is crisis. Olson (1982), in *Rise and Decline of Nations*, argues that World War II upset the entire structure of interest groups in affected countries. With their organizational capacity in tatters and their links to authority severed, entrenched special interests were no longer able to exercise a "sclerotic" effect on economic policy making and growth. This book excited significant response, admiring of the power of its parsimonious theory and sometimes skeptical about the historical evidence marshaled in support of the theory. However, there seems to be little scope for using crisis to explain the difference between developing and developed countries. Developing countries are among the most upheaval-prone in the world, but within these societies it is actually the best-organized interest groups that seem to be most resilient. For example, despite the departure of the Suharto regime, the transition to democracy, and severe economic crisis, the former cronies of the old regime—special interests *par excellence*—continue to hold sway over privatization, deregulation, and anticorruption efforts in Indonesia (*Oxford Analytica Daily Brief* 2003).

Second, the sheer number of interest groups might affect their overall impact. Multiple interest groups, competing for state attention, might offset each others' influence. Experience suggests otherwise, however. In conditions where interest groups are strong generally, governments tend to respond to interest group competition by arranging logrolls that give competing interest groups what they want at the expense of unorganized interests. Omnibus legislation emanating from the U.S. Congress frequently provides examples of this. Bates (1981) concludes that in the African countries he examines, all special interests (large farmers, urban residents) were satisfied at the expense of unorganized interests (small farmers).

Finally, it might be that countries differ in the prevalence of well-organized groups with interests antagonistic to development. This is implicit in the work of

Frieden (1991). He explores the role of economic interests in the quite different responses of five Latin American countries to similar crises. Two hypotheses frame the argument. The greater the internal cohesion of a particular economic sector, the stronger is its influence on government response to crisis; and the more a sector stands to gain or lose from policy change, the more it will invest in exerting influence. The first hypothesis is familiar. The second rests on the notion that sectors with assets that cannot be easily transferred to other uses—sectors with more specific assets—have the most to gain from influencing policy.⁵ Bates (1983) similarly argues that the nature of production (in his case, cocoa in Ghana and cereal grains in Kenya) systematically influences producer incentives to act collectively or collusively.

Firms that derive large rents from natural resources or from government-established barriers to entry, or that are capital-intensive, with capital equipment useful only in the production of particular goods, have stronger interests in mobilizing. An important aspect of asset specificity is pre-existing government privileges for a sector. If there are high rents to production in a particular sector because of government privileges, and those privileges are not transferable to other sectors, then the assets of firms in the privileged sector are highly specific. However, Frieden explicitly abstains from explaining why more such privileges exist in some countries than in others.

The work of Bates and Frieden carefully charts the role of interest groups in policy failures of developing countries. Their arguments are not meant to identify why the influence of interest groups is more pernicious in some countries than in others. However, their conclusion—that the characteristics of the economic activities in which interest groups are engaged are a significant determinant of interest group activity—is reflected in subsequent research that examines the relationship between the nature of economic interests in a society and economic development. Engerman & Sokoloff (2002) and Acemoglu et al. (2002) observe first that economies differ systematically in the extent to which economic rents can be concentrated in a few hands. Some economies, such as those in many Spanish colonies in Latin America, relied on capital-intensive mineral extraction or plantation-style agriculture. Rents in other areas, such as many North American British colonies, could be extracted only through the efforts of large numbers of colonists as they worked in small agricultural plots or small manufacturing endeavors.

Engerman & Sokoloff (2002) painstakingly demonstrate that Latin American and Caribbean countries based on plantation agriculture or mineral extraction

⁵Williamson (1985) first described the problem of asset specificity as the potential that a firm could be held up by a trading partner because the firm's assets were useful only in producing goods to sell to that trading partner. Frieden's notion is somewhat different. Assets are specific when firms cannot use their assets outside the sector that government might regulate, independent of how many trading partners the firm has.

generated a wide range of policy inefficiencies. Their argument, and that of Acemoglu et al. (2002), is that the early comparative economic advantage of these countries lay in economic activities that naturally concentrated wealth in a few hands. Political power followed economic power, and the politically powerful had no incentive to permit an even economic nor political playing field for citizens. They imposed high barriers to entry into manufacturing and finance, underprovided education, and limited the electoral franchise to a small slice of the citizenry. In the United States, in contrast, particularly the northern states, the nature of economic activity created a greater demand for skilled labor, and the situation was precisely the reverse. Acemoglu et al. (2002) look at similar facts but emphasize the second important government failure: the inability to make credible promises to citizens. This is discussed in greater detail in later sections.

Despite different emphases, the essential point in both Engerman & Sokoloff (2002) and Acemoglu et al. (2002) is that the initial allocation of rents discourages institutional developments that are conducive to growth and development.⁶ Institutions, then, rather than collective action theory, are the key link in their argument from economic interests to economic development. Although these researchers point to institutions such as the franchise and restraints on the executive, their work paints with a broad institutional brush. This naturally leads one to ask which institutions matter for development. The next section of this essay reviews some of the rich literature linking political and electoral institutions to political incentives to pursue efficient policies.

The Institutional Links from Economic Interests to Economic Policies

The interest group literature is persuasive that policy inefficiencies tend to emerge because politicians weight interest group objectives more heavily than those of the average citizen of a country. Substantial progress has been made in understanding the circumstances under which political competitors are more likely to appeal to citizens broadly or to special interests narrowly. One branch of this research has focused on the analysis of formal electoral and political institutions (e.g., parliamentary versus presidential forms of government).⁷ To the extent that formal institutions in developing countries differ from those in developed countries, and can explain systematic policy failures in developing countries

⁶Similarly, Rueschmeyer et al. (1992) argue that the success of British colonies was generally (though not universally) due to the lack of control of local elites over the colonial state. Why this lack of control prevailed is precisely what Engerman & Sokoloff and Acemoglu et al. attempt to explain.

⁷The labels of “political” for those institutions that govern political decision making of officials already in government, and of “electoral” for those institutions that govern how officials get to office, are used purely for expository convenience.

relative to developed countries, they also can account for divergent development experiences.⁸

To determine whether electoral and political institutions penalize politicians for satisfying special interests at the expense of the national interest, one must first establish what kinds of policies are generally associated with special or national interests.⁹ Most of the work comparing the policy effects of formal institutions focuses on budget policies. Under this rubric, the usual assumption in the literature is that narrowly targeted spending, with no positive spillovers to the wider population, favors special interests. Public-good spending and redistributive spending that benefits large segments of the population do not. Other metrics for assessing whether politicians pursue the public interest are potentially preferable, but since they are difficult to measure and test, the literature focuses on budgets.

For example, Cox & McCubbins (2001) argue that institutions influence the tradeoff between policies targeted at narrow or broad constituencies, depending on whether institutions give candidates incentives to develop personal constituencies or give parties incentives to splinter. Persson & Tabellini (2000) distinguish electoral institutions in a slightly different way; they ask whether electoral institutions give politicians incentives to provide narrow or public goods, but also ask whether they moderate or exacerbate politician incentives to engage in rent seeking. Milesi-Ferretti et al. (2002) analyze a third permutation: the incentives of government to provide group-specific or geographically targeted benefits.

ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS Cox (1997) highlights three electoral institutions that influence policy tradeoffs between nationally and narrowly targeted policies. How many votes can voters cast? How large are district magnitudes? More votes and larger magnitudes increase incentives for parties to splinter. Can voters express a preference for individual candidates? If so, candidates have strong incentives to seek personal constituencies, even at the expense of their party and its orientation

⁸There are many other institutional debates in the political economy literature. For example, one of the core debates in American politics concerns the driving forces of congressional organization: whether it is redistributive (matching committee membership to legislator demand for committee policies), as in Shepsle & Weingast (1987); informational (using committee influence to provide an incentive to legislators to become experts in areas of great uncertainty), as in Krehbiel (1991); or partisan (parties, rather than committees, are the vehicle through which legislators solve collective action problems), as in Cox & McCubbins (1993). This debate, usefully summarized by Shepsle & Weingast (1994), uses policy outcomes to establish which underlying motivations drive congressional organization rather than using congressional organization to explain changes in policy. It therefore does not have direct implications for the institutions-and-development debate.

⁹Shleifer et al. (2003) argue for the primacy of institutions in economic development. However, their analysis concerns the difficulties societies have as they weave between disorder and dictatorship. They abstract from the specific incentives of political decision makers to adopt the laws and economic policies that are their focus in explaining development outcomes.

toward a broader constituency. Cross-country data confirm substantial variation with respect to some of these electoral institutions and sharp differences between developing and developed countries. The more than 90 countries that held competitive elections in 2000 were evenly split in their reliance on proportional representation (PR) versus plurality electoral rules. However, among the poorer half of these countries (those with purchasing power parity-adjusted per capita incomes of less than \$6900), two thirds used plurality systems. District magnitude varies similarly: The average district magnitude is 16 in poorer countries with PR systems, but is 24 in richer countries.¹⁰

Persson & Tabellini (2000) compare a majoritarian system (single-member districts, party control over nominations, and a stylized parliamentary form of government) with a proportional system (single district, closed list, and party control over nominations).¹¹ The winner-take-all rules in majoritarian systems forces competing political parties to focus exclusively on the swing (indifferent) voting constituency, leading them to promise fewer public goods (which benefit all constituencies) and more targeted goods (targeted exclusively at the swing constituency). Proportional systems extract a greater political cost from parties that attempt this strategy, though, because PR systems permit votes in the nonswing constituencies to influence control of the legislature.

Milesi-Ferretti et al. (2002) compare the same two voting rules, also assuming a stylized parliamentary form of government. They ask how a shift from more to less proportional electoral rules influences government incentives to target spending on homogeneous but geographically dispersed groups or on heterogeneous but geographically concentrated groups. Voters have no exogenous ideological predilections but have different preferences over geographically and nongeographically targeted goods. Following the logic of the “citizen candidate” model of Besley & Coate (2001), voters (not parties) choose candidates, and their selection depends on which candidate’s preferences are more likely to yield spending outcomes that best match voter preferences. Consistent with Persson & Tabellini (2000), Milesi-Ferretti et al. (2002) predict more geographically targeted spending in majoritarian systems and more group-targeted spending in more proportional systems. Unlike Persson & Tabellini (2000), they predict an ambiguous relationship between electoral rules and total government spending.

Other electoral differences also matter. Contributors to Mainwaring & Shugart (1997), looking at Latin American presidencies, observe that in Brazil and

¹⁰Competitive elections are those featuring multiple competing candidates or parties, more than one party contesting, and no candidate or party winning more than 75% of the vote. All the information in this paragraph is from Beck et al. (2001).

¹¹Persson, Tabellini and coauthors (e.g., Persson & Tabellini 2000) have launched the most comprehensive effort in the literature to model and test the effects of different political and electoral institutions on public policy, particularly public spending. This review draws many examples from their work, in many cases to contrast their assumptions about institutional rules with the actual rules scholars have analyzed in the comparative politics literature.

Argentina, candidates are chosen by directly elected state governors rather than by national political leaders. In Argentina, this leads to greater internal fragmentation of parties and weaker incentives to focus on the national interest than one might otherwise predict on the basis of its closed-list PR system. It also exacerbates party fragmentation in Brazil, whose open-list PR system, low party thresholds, and historically lax rules governing party alliances already promote the pursuit of narrow over broad interests. Colombia prohibits parties from denying the use of their party label to any list of candidates. Within one electoral district, therefore, competing lists can bear the same party label, again yielding greater fragmentation than would otherwise be the case, and therefore greater political incentives to focus on narrow rather than national interests.

The ratio of voters to legislators across electoral districts also affects the ability of some voters to impose costs on others. The upper legislative chambers of the Dominican Republic and the United States assign sparsely populated regions the same representation as heavily populated regions. California, with approximately 33 million people, has the same number of senators (two) as each of the 24 smallest states, which together have approximately 36 million residents. The Distrito Nacional of the Dominican Republic has 28% of the electorate and one senator; the 16 smallest provinces each have one senator, as well, but together they have only 23% of the electorate. In India, the largest constituency of the lower house, the Lok Sabha, has 25,000,000 voters, whereas the smallest has only 50,000. In Canada's lower house, on the other hand, most electoral districts have 90,000–100,000 voters; the smallest has 27,000 and the largest 115,000, only four times larger. Voters in districts where this ratio is low have greater influence on legislation, all else equal, than voters where it is large.¹² Lee (1997) shows that in the United States, small states receive a disproportionately large share of almost all nondiscretionary redistributive transfers, independent of need—even though the small-state bias is strong only in the Senate.

Based on these analyses, one can conclude that electoral rules matter for policy but almost surely do not explain why some countries develop and others do not. High vote thresholds provide an incentive for parties to coalesce and to prefer policies in the national interest relatively more. However, they are also an effective tool to prevent political upstarts from challenging existing parties that fail to perform, reducing the sanctions on existing parties that engage in more rent seeking. In addition, countries tend to exhibit clusters of electoral institutions with offsetting effects. For example, low district magnitudes reduce party fragmentation, but they also encourage candidates to develop personal constituencies.

¹²See Samuels & Snyder (2001) for a comprehensive analysis of malapportionment. They show, for example, that Argentine and Brazilian malapportionment is much worse than the Dominican Republic's. Some authors also consider the sheer number of legislators. Bradbury & Crain (2001), for example, find that government spending rises with the number of legislators but that bicameralism dampens this effect.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS Political institutions determine which politicians can set the agenda; which can veto proposed changes in law or regulation; and which can force other politicians to leave office or to seek reelection. The stronger are the veto and agenda-setting powers of political decision makers with broader and more national constituencies, and the less vulnerable such politicians are to expulsion by the other decision makers, the more policy will reflect national rather than narrow interests.

These institutions vary substantially across countries. The relative authority of the executive and legislative branches over the budget differs from country to country (see Hallerberg & von Hagen 1999). In Chile and many other Latin American countries, only the president can propose the national budget and the legislature has tightly restricted amendment powers. In the United States, in contrast, only the House of Representatives can originate a spending bill and the president has no powers of amendment. The authority that each branch of government wields directly over the tenure of the other also varies. In some countries (e.g., Russia), presidents can call new elections for the legislature. In others (e.g., Italy), the legislature can bring down the government without having to go through new elections; in still other countries, legislators who want to replace a cabinet must bear the risk of new legislative elections, with significant consequences for legislative cohesion (Huber 1996, Diermeier & Feddersen 1998).

Presidential and parliamentary systems incorporate different bundles of institutional arrangements governing the assignment of veto and agenda-setting power and the control of the executive and legislature over each other's electoral destinies. A far greater fraction of poorer democracies is presidential.¹³ The large literature distinguishing parliamentary and presidential systems therefore provides a convenient way to evaluate the policy and development impact of these bundles.¹⁴

Persson et al. (2000) ask how the change from a presidential to a parliamentary form of government affects public good provision that benefits all citizens, narrowly targeted policy making that benefits small groups of citizens, and rent seeking that benefits policy makers themselves. They assume that both systems employ majoritarian electoral rules (single-member districts) and that parties enjoy complete control over candidate selection and policy stances. Parliamentary

¹³The more than 90 countries exhibiting competitive elections in 2000 were evenly split between the two systems; almost 75% of the poorer countries in this group were presidential.

¹⁴There is a lively debate about whether presidential systems are less stable or more susceptible to gridlock, which is not the focus of the argument here. For contributions to this debate, see Linz & Valenzuela (1994), who argue against presidentialism, and Shugart & Mainwaring (1997), who suggest that the vast differences in the electoral rules and level of party discipline among presidential systems make sharp conclusions about the effects of presidentialism on stability, gridlock, and capricious decision making more difficult. Cheibub & Limongi (2002) argue as well that political instability need not be correlated with political system. They find that a core assumption—that majority control of both executive and legislature makes parliamentary systems more stable—frequently fails to hold; 22% of parliamentary regimes they examine have minority governments.

systems endow cabinet members with exclusive, all-or-nothing proposal power over their portfolios, where one portfolio relates to spending and the other to taxation. Each cabinet member is entitled to veto the proposals of all other cabinet members. Veto, however, leads to the collapse of the cabinet and the potential loss of this veto power by all cabinet members. Mutual veto power allows the cabinet members to make credible agreements with each other.

In presidential systems, Persson et al. (2000) assume that all proposal power rests with the legislature (the executive can make no amendments but can only disapprove or approve the final package), and proposal power within the legislature is dispersed, as in the cabinet.¹⁵ However, the committee in charge of tax proposals cannot veto the proposals of the spending (appropriations) committee, and vice versa. The two committees therefore have no capacity to make credible agreements with each other. Proposals are rejected only if a majority of the legislature votes them down.

The difference in credibility drives the different outcomes in the two systems. Because the tax committee in the presidential system cannot veto the spending committee's proposed allocation of spending, it knows that it will have to accept a lower spending allocation to its own constituents than it would otherwise be able to extract. As a consequence, the tax committee sets taxes very low. This drives rent seeking and targeted transfers to specific voters down to zero, but it also severely reduces public good provision. In parliamentary systems, though, the institutional set-up guarantees the tax minister that he will get a large allocation, so he proposes a high tax rate. Public-good provision, targeted transfers to specific groups of voters, and rent seeking are all high.

The analysis of Persson et al. (2000) is the most rigorous in linking characteristics of presidential and parliamentary systems to policy outcomes. However, they make assumptions and emphasize institutional characteristics that other analysts do not. It is therefore important to ask whether their conclusions are sensitive to changes in these assumptions or are driven by institutional characteristics to which they give less emphasis. For example, Shugart & Carey (1992) abstract from the separation-of-powers argument and argue that the key distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems is that voters can cast a separate vote for the "national" policy maker in presidential systems, whereas parliamentary systems compel them to bundle their votes for the national policy maker and the legislator. Voters are therefore more likely to oblige legislators in parliamentary systems to pursue a broader focus in policy making, giving less prominence to particularistic issues. Persson et al. (2000) incorporate this difference in their institutional set-up, in fact, but their analysis suggests that it is not the institutional difference that drives policy differences between the two regime types.

Persson et al. (2000) assume presidents can only veto spending bills and show that this veto power has no effect at all on final outcomes. Shugart & Haggard

¹⁵They also analyze a variant in which the president can propose the size, but not the allocation, of the budget, yielding the same results.

(2001) look at 23 presidential systems and find seven in which presidents enjoy exclusive proposal power over spending legislation and in which legislatures confront severe constraints on amending presidential proposals. The policy differences predicted by Persson et al. (2000) are likely to change under presidential agenda control, though they do not analyze this case. Assuming presidents cannot make credible promises to legislatures, legislators do not believe presidential promises that spending will be directed to their areas of concern; they therefore refuse to approve high taxes. This is the same prediction made by Persson et al. (2000). However, whereas the agenda-setting spending committee prefers targeted benefits to its narrow constituency, and therefore low public-good spending, the president's preferences are national, so that presidential agenda control should lead to more public-good spending and less targeted spending than Persson et al. (2000) predict.

Persson et al. (2000) also assume that legislative committees in presidential systems cannot make credible agreements with each other. However, legislative leadership (Cox & McCubbins 1993) or a rules committee (Huber 1992) have been found to enforce intercommittee agreements.¹⁶ Huber (1992) argues that closed rules in France and the United States—the ability to ensure that bills out of committee are discussed by the plenary with no amendments permitted—are used to preserve the credibility of bargains between parties. If the president does not enjoy agenda control, but the legislature has solved the interlegislator credibility problem, the core prediction of low spending in presidential systems no longer obtains. Spending outcomes should instead resemble those in parliamentary systems with respect to levels and allocation across public and private goods. Indeed, analysts of Latin American presidential systems point to the significant use of “pork” as the vehicle with which presidents drive through their legislative agendas (Shugart & Haggard 2001).

Parliamentary systems are also heterogeneous on dimensions that affect policy predictions. For example, there is substantial variation across parliamentary systems in the rules governing the vote of confidence, which play a crucial role in policy outcomes in the parliamentary system hypothesized by Persson et al. (2000). If a vote against the government's bill means the government falls, then, as Diermeier & Feddersen (1998) argue, the ruling coalition can more aggressively target its own constituencies at the expense of those outside the coalition. The premise in such models, however, is that any member of the ruling coalition can make an issue a confidence vote and be sure that the government will adhere to its results.

Empirically, however, of the 18 OECD parliamentary democracies with the vote of confidence that Huber (1996) considers, in only six is it written into the constitution. Elsewhere it is based on convention or standing orders of parliament,

¹⁶Krehbiel (1996) argues that the legislative leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives has relatively weak influence over policy making, though his case concerns possible conflicts between the median voter of the House and the median committee voter rather than conflicts between committees.

so there are few formal legal obstacles to ignoring it. Moreover, in every country with a vote-of-confidence procedure, it is the prime minister who must propose that a vote on a bill be a confidence vote (Huber 1996). This centralizes proposal and veto power in the hands of the prime minister rather than of individual ministers with line portfolios. The line ministers cannot make all-or-nothing offers that benefit their narrow constituencies, as in the model of Persson et al. (2000). The prime minister presumably has broader interests at heart, and would prefer less targeted public spending, as in presidential systems, rather than more.

The heterogeneity of presidential and parliamentary systems over important institutional dimensions (such as the agenda control of presidents, the ability of legislators and presidents to make credible commitments, and the binding nature of the vote of confidence) clouds the conclusion that presidential systems pursue different policies that are worse for development. The mere fact that developing countries are more likely to have presidential forms of government is unlikely to be a key factor to explain slow development.

ASSESSING EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF POLICY EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS A growing literature finds that presidential systems spend much less than parliamentary systems (Persson et al. 2000). This is a robust finding. The likely explanation, emerging from the foregoing discussion, is that presidents cannot make credible commitments to legislators about how money will be spent, so legislators are reluctant to approve high taxes.¹⁷ There is less empirical support for the hypothesis that regime choice influences the allocation of government spending. Keefer (2003a) finds no evidence of a systematic effect of regime type on several dimensions of government performance, including gross secondary school enrollment and public investment. Persson & Tabellini (1999) themselves do not find strong evidence that broad-based spending is proportionately less and targeted spending proportionately more in presidential than in parliamentary systems.

What explains the inconsistent findings that presidential systems spend less, as predicted, but not differently, as also predicted? One possibility is variations in electoral institutions within presidential systems. Scholars who have studied presidential countries have documented a strong predilection for pork (targeted spending), which the earlier theories predict should be greater in parliamentary systems. This work blames pork on electoral rules and weak party discipline. Ames (1995) attributes overwhelming concern for pork (constituency-specific projects) among Brazilian legislators to the open-list legislative system in place there but finds as well that high district magnitudes attenuate this effect, as one might expect (since in large districts it is more difficult for single legislators to take credit for projects). The role of governors in Argentine politics obliges politicians to target state-level rather than national-level priorities (Jones et al. 2000).

¹⁷This argument is more plausible than the alternative—that legislators in presidential systems cannot make credible commitments to each other—since legislators in fact appear to be perfectly able to make such agreements.

Cross-country tests of the effects of electoral rules on spending allocation are more ambiguous, however. Persson & Tabellini (1999) find that low district magnitudes drive political competitors to satisfy smaller constituencies. As a consequence, broad public goods (defined as expenditures on transportation, education, and public order and safety) are lower in countries with low district magnitudes. Using similar measures of electoral institutions, Keefer (2003a) finds little effect on spending allocation, however, either of district magnitude or of electoral rule. Moreover, Milesi-Ferretti et al. (2002), using sophisticated measures of proportionality, find strong evidence that more proportional systems in the OECD [with district magnitudes of 20 in 2000, on average, according to the *Database of Political Institutions* (Beck et al. 2001)] generate *higher* transfers to nongeographic groups than plurality systems (with average district magnitudes of five). However, they do not find that geographically targeted spending is lower in more proportional systems, nor are they able to replicate their results for the Latin American sample.

Assessments of the effects of electoral rules on rent seeking are similarly mixed. Persson et al. (2003) marshal substantial evidence that majoritarian electoral rules deter corruption. They use the *Particularism* database (Seddon Wallack et al. 2003) for their institutional measures. Keefer (2003a), using institutional data from the *Database of Political Institutions* (Beck et al. 2001) and different controls, finds contrary results. The empirical results mirror the inconsistencies in the theoretical arguments linking electoral rules to corruption. Majoritarian systems increase corruption if political promises prior to elections are not credible; they reduce it if promises are credible, or if voters use elections to judge candidate competency (that is, plurality voting rules increase voters' ability to influence individual candidates' careers, hence the term "career concerns models").

There is little doubt that electoral institutions influence government behavior. However, the evidence is not clear on the direction of the effect. Nor does the evidence support the claim that electoral institutions explain why politicians in developing countries are systematically more prone to the pursuit of policies that benefit narrow and private interests.

Economic Interests, Institutions, and the Credibility of Government Commitments

Together, the arguments so far reviewed demonstrate that the structure of interest groups and institutions establishes who gets what in a society, but they do not offer robust explanations for differences in levels of economic development. However, a significant literature argues that economic interests and institutions affect growth not simply because they influence policy but because they enable policy makers to make credible policy commitments.

The most important of these commitments is to refrain from expropriation, direct or indirect—a problem placed at the center of the study of development by North (1981). Ample evidence justifies the weight given to this issue. For example,

a puzzle emerges in Bates' work on Africa: Why did governments set expropriatory tax rates so high that farmers actually stopped producing? McMillan (2001) argues that the governments studied by Bates could not promise *not* to expropriate—their horizons were too short and their incentives to engage in opportunistic behavior too great for farmers to believe that low tax rates, if imposed, would have persisted into the future. As a consequence, governments could not reap gains from reducing tax rates.

Further evidence on the point comes from year 2000 values of a widely used measure of the security of property rights from Political Risk Services, the "rule of law." It was nearly one standard deviation lower in countries below the median country's per capita income than in those above it. Keefer & Knack (1997) find that poor countries with insecure property rights not only fail to "catch up" to rich countries but fall further behind—they "diverge." This evidence is not simply an indictment of redistributive government. In fact, the correlation between the Political Risk Services rule-of-law measure and the size of government (where size of government is an indicator of the extent to which government taxes citizen assets) is significantly negative (-0.35 in 1997).

Nor should these results be taken to reflect the development impact of the predictability or stability of government decision making, rather than its credibility. As Tsebelis (1995) argues, policy stability should be high when the set of policies that politicians prefer to the status quo is small, but low otherwise. The work of Tsebelis and others precisely examines the stability effects of different institutional arrangements. Credibility, though, refers to how reliance on politician promises today creates an incentive for politicians to change policy opportunistically tomorrow. For example, U.S. tax policy is not particularly predictable or stable—it changes regularly and often substantially. However, it is credible: Entrepreneurs know that if they invest according to the dictates of the tax code today, the mere fact of their reliance will not trigger an opportunistic change in the tax code tomorrow.¹⁸

The predictability-versus-credibility distinction links to a classic dichotomy articulated by Cox & McCubbins (2001), who distinguish institutions according to whether they lead governments to be indecisive or irresolute. The credibility (resoluteness) of institutions can conflict with their decisiveness in the face of crisis, creating ambiguity about the net effect of such institutions on development outcomes. Shugart & Mainwaring (1997) argue, for example, that Latin American governments exhibit a tendency toward gridlock. Keefer & Knack (2002b) look at

¹⁸Keefer & Stasavage (2003) present another example that makes this point. On a single policy dimension, under majority rule and with all voters perfectly informed, policy is always stable at the median voter's most preferred outcome. This stable policy outcome, however, need not be credible. The median voter could prefer a law that protects foreign investment and then, once investment enters, could prefer a law in the next period that expropriates that investment. If policy were credible, foreign investors would respond vigorously to the first-period decision not to expropriate and invest heavily. Because it is not, their investment response to the decision is muted or nonexistent.

the effect of political checks and balances, the institutional characteristic most often associated with credibility and gridlock, on country credit ratings. If decisiveness matters most to lenders, because they want to be sure countries will repay loans even in times of crisis, then checks and balances should have a negative impact on credit ratings. If resoluteness matters most, because lenders also want to be sure countries honor their loan commitments, checks and balances should matter positively. In fact, checks and balances significantly increase credit ratings.

How governments achieve credibility remains an unsettled question. Considerable attention has, however, been dedicated to the role of political checks and balances, which make it difficult for any one political actor to act unilaterally toward citizens, and to the universal franchise and competitive elections. It happens that these two institutional arrangements together encompass the most usual definitions of democracy.

North & Weingast (1989) argue that interest rates charged to the English Crown following the Glorious Revolution declined because of the enhanced power of the Parliament to prevent the British monarch from renegeing on sovereign obligations.¹⁹ Henisz (2000) develops an indicator of the number of veto players, weighted according to the heterogeneity of their policy preferences, and finds that it predicts measures of property rights insecurity and that it is significantly related to economic growth. This indicator matches closely the fragmentation of political parties in a country. A different measure of checks and balances, from the *Database of Political Institutions*, is also a robust predictor of economic growth, operating on growth through its effect on the security of property rights (Keefer 2003b).

A central argument in the literature on monetary economics is that noncredible governments, unable to commit to a promise not to implement a surprise expansion of the money supply, are less likely to hold down inflation. Keefer & Stasavage (2003) demonstrate that checks and balances provide that credibility, constraining opportunistic behavior in the setting of monetary policy. Keefer & Knack (2002a) show that checks and balances are key to controlling credibility-related distortions in another policy area, public investment. These arguments and those of North & Weingast make clear that credible commitment is not necessarily neutral with respect to the quality of economic policy. Without credible commitment, sound monetary policy and adequate public investment are more difficult to achieve.

Acemoglu and colleagues (Acemoglu & Robinson 2001, Acemoglu et al. 2002) reprise the question raised by Bates' work: Why do politicians allow inefficient policies to persist when they would have more resources at their disposal if they

¹⁹Sussman & Yafeh (2002) dispute these conclusions, however; they argue that neither movements in interest rates nor the evolution of the volume of British government debt can be traced to the effects of the Glorious Revolution. Stasavage (2003) revisits the Glorious Revolution and concludes that Parliament constrained opportunistic behavior only by chance and gradually, when the minority of parliamentary members who favored honoring sovereign obligations were able to make a deal involving religious freedom with those who were less favorable.

eliminated them? Their answer focuses on the implications of elections and the franchise. Expansion of the franchise gives the nonelite majority the opportunity not only to guarantee its own property rights but also to expropriate the elite. Where initial inequality in the distribution of assets is high, and where the threat of rebellion is low, the elite has more to lose from expanding the franchise and refrains from doing so. Where the economic well-being of the elite depends to a great extent on investment by the nonelite rather than on the exploitation of mineral resources or plantation agriculture, the elite prefers to expand the franchise. In doing so, the elite makes credible its promise not to expropriate nonelites, thereby securing property rights and promoting economic growth.

Several puzzles suggest room for further research into the role of checks and balances and the universal franchise in allowing credible commitments by government. First, the security of property rights varies significantly across countries that exhibit political checks and balances. In half of all countries that exhibited either checks and balances or competitive elections in the 1990s, the rule-of-law measure was the same as or worse than in the median country that lacked one or the other.²⁰ Second, most measures of democracy do not exhibit a robust relationship to growth, and yet most democracy measures focus on the extent to which countries have competitive elections, a universal franchise, and, in many cases, restraints on the discretion of the executive (checks and balances).

Przeworski et al. (2000) make this point emphatically with their election-based objective measure of democracy. Keefer (2003b) demonstrates that checks and balances, but not another objective measure of competitive elections (from the *Database on Political Institutions*) nor subjective measures of democracy (from *Freedom House* and *Polity IV*), are significantly associated with growth. Mulligan et al. (2003) argue that the only systematic policy difference between democracies and nondemocracies is the expenditures of the latter to suppress political competition.

Third, despite adverse economic endowments, Latin American countries eventually did develop the institutions, especially the universal franchise, that researchers claim protect the property rights of nonelites. Nevertheless, despite the correction of these institutional distortions in the twentieth century, sustained growth did not emerge.²¹

Fourth, theoretical models in the literature contemplate two straightforward institutional alternatives (limited versus universal franchise, for example). There

²⁰The rule-of-law measure is from Political Risk Services' *International Country Risk Guide* (unpublished data); the measures of checks and balances and competitive elections are from Beck et al. (2001).

²¹Acemoglu & Robinson (2002) do argue that in highly unequal countries, where democracy leads to redistribution, there is a strong incentive for the rich to restore autocratic government; democracy does not stabilize. However, although Latin America is highly unequal and democracy has been unstable, in only one country, Chile, was the suppression of an elected government clearly related to (if not fully explained by) the strong redistributionist tendencies of the government.

are, however, a variety of ways in which an elite can bring the nonelite into power without jeopardizing the elite's control of its own assets. For example, allowing a popular vote for one legislative chamber but not another, the system that prevailed in the United States in the nineteenth century, gave the average citizen some ability to block special interests' efforts to accrue excessive privileges, while giving elites a way to veto efforts to redistribute their wealth. (The fact that these legislative institutions did not necessarily work in this way is the subject of subsequent sections of the essay.) Similarly, the military government in Chile enshrined an electoral system and a legacy of military senators in the constitution that together limited the ability of redistributionist political forces to control economic policy following the restoration of democratic government. Why have more elites not tried to provide such institutional guarantees, securing property rights for all but insulating the elite from the threat of redistribution?

One way to resolve these puzzles is to examine the underlying imperfections in political markets that might distort politician incentives. Even when the franchise is universal, institutional checks and balances are pervasive, and veto players have divergent interests, these imperfections may lead veto players to conclude that there is little electoral payoff to exerting effort on behalf of citizens whose rights are jeopardized by the government. These same political market imperfections seem to explain systematic policy differences between poorer and richer countries.

Imperfections in Political Markets—Credibility and Information as Explanations for Policy Failures in Developing Countries

Of the many imperfections in political markets that scholars have identified, this essay closes with a discussion of just two: information and credibility. Embedded in the models discussed above are assumptions about the extent of voters' information about candidate characteristics or performance and the extent to which voters can believe the pre-electoral promises of candidates. Lack of either makes it more difficult for voters to hold candidates responsible for poor performance. Information and credibility imperfections encourage political actors to focus on a narrow group of constituents to the exclusion of all other citizens, or to ignore voters altogether.²² The impact on policy predictions can be significant. Persson & Tabellini (2000) show that majoritarian electoral systems are less corrupt when promises are credible, since majoritarianism forces candidates to compete more fiercely with each other in the swing district. They are more corrupt when promises are not credible, because they force voters to compete more fiercely with each other for benefits from governments.

²²Information solves an important problem in models of gridlock: Why do two veto players delay coming to an agreement that would make them both better off? Alesina & Drazen (1991) argue that delay gives both sides information about the other side's willingness to tolerate crisis, and therefore a potential advantage in any final settlement that offsets the benefits of early agreement.

IMPERFECT INFORMATION IN ELECTORAL MARKETS One branch of the information literature focuses on voters who are uninformed about candidate characteristics. These voters' decisions are swayed by political campaigns and advertisements, so special interests seek to purchase narrowly targeted policies by providing campaign finance (Baron 1994, Grossman & Helpman 1996). One policy consequence is that uninformed voters are simply less well served by government. In addition, governments accountable only to uninformed voters can be more vigorous in the pursuit of their own private interests. Because uninformed voters cannot easily identify the effect of rent seeking on their welfare, politicians have greater scope to extract rents (Persson & Tabellini 2000). Adserà et al. (2003) document exactly this: Corruption is significantly higher in countries with lower newspaper circulation. Low newspaper circulation is also associated with low security of property rights (Keefer 2003b). Newspaper circulation is dramatically lower in poorer countries than in richer.

In other approaches, voters prefer to choose the most "competent" candidate but are imperfectly informed about candidate competency. Under these circumstances, officials bias resource allocation against those public goods whose outcomes are more "noisy" and harder to use to assess politician ability and toward those that are better signals of high ability (Mani & Mukand 2002). They would, for example, favor construction over education.

Finally, evidence suggests that when voters are informed about particular policies, they are able to extract greater resources and better performance from political agents. Strömberg (2001) demonstrates that between 1933 and 1935, federal assistance to low-income households in the United States was greater in counties where more households had radios and were thus more likely to be informed about government policies and programs. Besley & Burgess (2002) document that state governments in India increase public food distribution and calamity relief expenditure in response to declines in food production and crop flood damage when newspaper circulation, particularly in local languages, is greater. However, this evidence does not inform the broader question of whether policy is more socially beneficial when voters are more informed. It could, for example, be the case that the mass media better enabled politicians to take credit for targeted payoffs to particular constituencies, leading them to reduce expenditures on public goods or on broad-based social programs.

LACK OF CREDIBILITY IN ELECTORAL MARKETS The ability of politicians to make credible pre-electoral promises also provides a persuasive explanation of why policy failures are more likely in some countries than in others. When campaign promises are not credible—when it costs election winners little to abandon them—electoral competition does little to spur politician incentives to satisfy constituents. In young or poor democracies, political party development and other indicators of credibility in political systems are often weak. Parties have little history and no identifiable positions on issues. Individual candidates may be credible on one or two issue dimensions (e.g., religion) but rarely on the broad issues that define efficient government performance.

Researchers have taken two approaches to the analysis of noncredibility in electoral politics. In the first approach (Ferejohn 1986, Persson & Tabellini 2000), voters can coordinate on ex post performance standards and reject incumbents that fail to meet them. Politicians provide no targeted private goods. They underprovide public goods and engage in greater rent seeking relative to when they are fully credible. In the second approach (Robinson & Verdier 2002), voters cannot coordinate on such performance standards and no public goods are provided at all. In this case, challengers are irrelevant, since they are never credible, and incumbent performance has no effect on voter behavior.

Both approaches explain the poor provision of public goods in developing countries, including the rule of law and the security of property rights, but they are at odds with another characteristic of developing countries. Specifically, these models predict indifference on the part of politicians to the provision of targeted goods—except to voters from whose consumption candidates directly derive utility (Robinson & Verdier 2000). However, in most developing-country democracies, politicians are intensely concerned about delivering targeted transfers.

Keefer (2002) suggests a third credibility scenario, rooted in the literature on clientelism that describes patron-client relationships as repeated, personalized interactions between patrons and clients. Based on such interactions, politicians can make credible promises to some voters but not to others. Repeated interaction constitutes a basis for reputation building. Politicians with personalized reputations with some voters can make credible promises to those voters, even if to no others. In countries that exhibit “partial” credibility, the foundation of a politician’s credibility is not the policy record of party or politician. Instead, voters believe the politicians who have, for example, shown themselves to be reliable sources of personal assistance. These might be locally influential people who have helped families with loans or jobs or provided assistance with legal or bureaucratic difficulties. In the absence of well-developed political parties or national party leaders who are more broadly credible to voters, voters can only rely on the promises of such influential people in making electoral choices.²³

Partial credibility explains many of the policy outcomes observed in democracies that might be labeled less credible (or less developed in general). Because the only policy promises that matter prior to elections are those that “clients” (voters) believe, promises of private goods to clients are more politically attractive than public goods that benefit both clients and nonclients. Promises of public works and government jobs become the currency of political competition at the expense of universal access to high-quality education and health care. The former can be targeted to individuals and small groups of clients. Universal access is by definition not easily targeted. Corruption or rent seeking is also high, since an individual

²³Stokes (2001) and contributors use public opinion polls to evaluate simultaneously the political impact of citizen information and political credibility. Polling information allows them to assess implicitly whether citizens believe candidate promises, whether they use past performance to judge future actions of politicians, and how economic shocks influence their evaluation of candidates.

client is unlikely to have two patrons; most voters do not have politicians competing for their votes.

Keefer (2003a) documents that young democracies exhibit greater than average public investment (targeted infrastructure investment), lower secondary school enrollment (nontargetable), less secure property rights, and greater corruption. This pattern can be explained by the greater prevalence among young democracies of partially credible political actors. Young democracies are more likely to exhibit noncredible political parties and reliance among political competitors on clientelist promises to the small groups of voters to whom they can make credible promises.

The pre-electoral credibility of politicians is useful to examine not only because it seems to explain many of the policy failures observed in poor countries but also because it explains why so few countries have managed to sustain long periods of economic growth and prosperity. Reputations are fragile and difficult to develop. For example, as Keefer (2002) argues, some countries (such as Great Britain or the United States) began their periods of democracy and a near universal franchise with political parties that had clearly established differences on issues ranging from religion to land reform and trade policy. This is not the experience of most countries. Instead, most parties need to start building reputations after democracy is established. In the year 2000, the average age of political parties in half of the 96 countries in the *Database of Political Institutions* with competitive legislative and executive elections was less than 26 years. These countries were disproportionately poor. Unfortunately, the reputation-building process is fraught with multiple equilibria, many of which involve no reputation at all, or a reputation for policies that are probably irrelevant for development (e.g., valor in the battle for independence or religious righteousness).

CONCLUSION

The rich literature in political economy has vastly improved our ability to understand who wins and loses in the process of economic policy making. It has clearly shown the absence of any necessary connection between political decision making and efficiency or equity objectives, and it offers explanations of frequent deviations of policy from the socially optimal that are not rooted in policy-maker error or ignorance. Applied to developing countries, political economy analyses have demonstrated that often catastrophic policy choices and living conditions do not result primarily from a shortage of resources or an oppressive international economic order, but rather from local political and social conditions and the distorted incentives with which these conditions endow government decision makers.

Theory and evidence suggest that development is only weakly influenced by constitutional choices, such as whether parliamentary systems are presidential or parliamentary or whether electoral systems are proportional or majoritarian. Elections and the universal franchise appear to have similarly little impact on economic development. Instead, theory and evidence point to one type of institutional

arrangement—elections *cum* political checks and balances—as important for growth and development.

Even among countries that exhibit these institutional arrangements, though, the range of development experiences is wide. Imperfections in electoral and political markets offer an explanation for this. Both voter information and politician credibility differ substantially between developed and developing countries and explain why politically induced development distortions are greater in some countries than others. At the same time, these imperfections explain why development is difficult to achieve. Reputation is difficult to build and subject to a multitude of possible adverse equilibria. It not surprising, then, that politics so rarely supports sustained development.

Ample work remains. We do not know how reputation is built, even in successful countries. There is no analysis of the conditions under which politicians translate noneconomic reputations (e.g., for successfully fighting colonial occupiers) into a reputation for pursuing growth-promoting policies. Evidence on the role of information in politics and development relies on newspaper circulation rather than direct measures of the supply and demand for voter information. The literature provides little insight as to how incomplete information affects politicians' tradeoffs between public, nontargeted and private, targeted goods. The origins of an informed electorate are almost entirely unknown. All of these are relevant questions in every country, developed or not. However, it is in the examination of underdevelopment that their importance in a complete theory of political economy has become especially clear.

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POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

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Key Words election laws, proportional representation, vote-seat correspondence, issue congruence

■ **Abstract** Two large research programs have analyzed election-based connections between citizens and policy makers in different democracies. Studies of vote-seat representation in the tradition of Rae (1967) begin with citizens' party votes and have made substantial progress in elucidating the impact of election laws, geographic vote distributions, and the number of parties and their interactions on the proportionality of party representation. Studies of substantive representation in the tradition of Miller & Stokes (1963) begin with citizen issue preferences and link these to the positions of their representatives. Most studies outside the United States, confronting multimember districts and the cohesion of party representatives, have focused on voter-party dyads rather than geographic constituencies, and confirmed the importance of issues linked to a common electoral discourse and the greater structure of legislator issue positions. Recently, a number of explicitly comparative analyses have begun to analyze collective correspondence and confront other limitations of the literature.

INTRODUCTION

Robert Dahl observed that in the nineteenth century the idea of representation “transformed democracy from a doctrine suitable only for small and rapidly vanishing city-states to one applicable to the large nation-states of the modern age” (Dahl 1989, p. 29). “Yet,” he added, “the change in democracy resulting from its union with representation created its own problems. An entirely new and highly complex constellation of political institutions, which we are only beginning to understand, superseded the sovereign assembly that was central to the ancient conception of democracy” (Dahl 1989, p. 30).

Democratic representation means that the actions of these policy makers are supposed to be responsive to the wishes of the people. Moreover, simple correspondence between what citizens want and what policy makers do is not enough. A benevolent dictatorship is not a representative democracy. The latter depends not only on correspondence or responsiveness but also on institutionalized

arrangements that reliably create such connections. The most essential and irreplaceable of these institutions is the free and competitive national election in which all citizens can participate equally (Pitkin 1967, pp. 232–34).

The language of principals and their agents is sometimes useful. In a representative relationship, we can conceive of the citizens as principals represented by agents to whom the citizens temporarily delegate the power to make public policies. In a democracy, the citizens should be equal to each other in this relationship. Various normative standards can be applied to specify the desired relations between the principals and their agents in detail. Empirical theories explain what shapes these relations in different countries and elections.

Virtually all research on citizens, elections, and policy making in contemporary democracies is relevant to democratic representation broadly conceived. Rather than attempting a grand synthesis, this essay reports on two large bodies of research in comparative politics, emergent research programs that have explicitly addressed initial representative connections between the citizens and their elected policy makers. The first body of research, “procedural” representation, begins with citizens’ votes for parties in elections. Party voting is then linked to party representation in the legislature through aggregation of party votes into victories. Democratic representation means that votes for parties should correspond to the seats those parties win in the legislature. The second body of research, “substantive” representation, begins with citizens’ preferences rather than with their votes. Voter choices under electoral competition link citizens’ preferences to the preferences and behavior of legislative representatives. Parties and candidates take positions on issues, and these electoral commitments shape their policy making after the election. Democratic representation means that citizens’ issue preferences should correspond to the positions or behavior of their representatives. Of course, these procedural and substantive connections between citizens and policy makers do not exhaust the representational linkages, which must also take account of the other forces that shape the making and implementation of public policies. Nonetheless, the two bodies of research considered here elucidate critical linkages in the representative connection.

CITIZENS’ VOTES AS THE STARTING POINT: THE VOTE-SEAT PARADIGM IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Let us begin with what seems a highly simplified formulation of the problem of democratic representation: the relationship between the votes for political parties that citizens cast in elections and the partisan composition of legislatures that emerge from those elections to represent them. This relatively coherent body of theory and research has made substantial progress in understanding one element of democratic representation. Typical of scientific progress, it has made headway in part by simplifying a broad normative problem into a limited empirical one. It deals with (or evades) perhaps the hardest empirical and normative problem in

representation analysis, citizen preferences, simply by assuming that all we can or need to know about those preferences is the partisan votes that citizens cast in competitive elections.

Election Laws

The study of votes, rules, and their electoral consequences has a very long history. John Stuart Mill was well aware that rules with single-member or winner-take-all districts tended to advantage the largest parties (or perhaps “a few large sectional minorities in particular places” (Mill 1958 [1861], p. 111). The family of election rules called “proportional representation” (PR) was invented to create greater proportionality in vote-seat correspondence. In his classic work *Political Parties*, Duverger (1954, p. 373) discussed the putative advantages of PR rules for vote-seat proportionality and also noted their variations and limitations in practice.

But vote-seat studies in the past 35 years have been dominated by Rae’s (1967, 1971) wonderful empirical study, *The Political Consequences of Electoral Laws*. This elegant little book systematically distinguished a variety of types of electoral laws, identified some of their important properties, introduced systematic measures of vote-seat disproportionality and the creation of legislative majorities, as well as the fractionalization of party systems, and performed other essential services on the way to analysis of the empirical consequences of election laws in 115 elections. Rae demonstrated that the critical feature of election rules that shaped vote-seat translation in these elections was their “district magnitude” (the average number of representatives per district), which dwarfed the still significant effects of differences in computation rules and other relevant features (Rae 1967, pp. 138–40). The widely used election rule with the greatest tendency to disproportionality is the single-member district (SMD) plurality rule, also known as first-past-the-post (hereafter, FPTP), used in such countries as the United States, Britain, Canada and, until recently, New Zealand.

Rae’s landmark empirical contribution has been elaborated and developed in a variety of different kinds of studies, empirical and methodological (e.g., Benoit 2001; Blais & Carty 1987; Cox 1991; Cox & Shugart 1991; Gallagher 1991, 1992; Grofman 1983; Grofman & Lijphart 1986; Gugkin & Taylor 1979; Lijphart 1985, 1986, 1990; Lijphart & Gibberd 1977; Loosemore & Hanby 1971; Taagepera 1986; Taagepera & Shugart 1989). Such studies, and others to be found in *Electoral Studies* and many other political science journals, have greatly extended Rae’s account of the variations in election rules and their consequences. One line of analysis has also integrated Rae’s work with the long-suggested idea of a “cube law” in vote-seat connections in SMD systems (e.g., Johnston et al. 1994, Tuftte 1973). The concept of proportionality itself contains alternative normative versions, reflected in part in different PR counting rules, as pointed out by Gallagher (1991). Specific rules are also adapted in various ways to achieve different practical purposes, including political stability and the partisan goals of the rule writers, as various studies of particular countries have elaborated. In 1994, Lijphart and his colleagues replicated and expanded Rae’s original work using

additional data, variables, and measures of disproportionality. Lijphart's (1994) conceptualization and measurement of an "effective threshold" provides a single measure that takes account of a number of specific features of election rules, including both district magnitude and formal minimum thresholds. It proves to be the most powerful predictor of vote-seat disproportionality, although the PR calculation formula and the size of the assembly remain significant (see Katz 1997, Ch. 9, for a reanalysis on a still larger data base).

Geographic Distributions

The analysis of election laws has dominated work on vote-seat correspondence, but two other important variables have also emerged in comparative research. One is the geographic distribution of the votes, which becomes important for proportionality when the election rules have low district magnitudes, above all in SMD systems. Naturally enough, American, British, and New Zealand scholars whose work has been primarily within such systems have long been sensitive to the role of geography, which is often ignored by scholars working in systems with large-magnitude PR rules. In 1942, Schattschneider provided a particularly clear account of the impact of geographic distribution on outcomes in SMD systems, concluding, "In an extreme case the party in question might win all of the seats or it might win none at all merely by virtue of the fact that it had received 25% of the total vote" (Schattschneider 1942, p. 70).

Some insight into the source of variation is provided by the work of political geographers, who visualize the division of the country into districts as a map superimposed over a map of the distribution of preferences (Gudgin & Taylor 1979, Johnston et al. 1994, Taylor & Johnston 1979, Taylor et al. 1986). In a two-party situation, the resulting intersection of geographic party preferences and district boundaries can be described by a curve graphing the distribution, which will usually take a normal bell shape. Lopsided districts are found in the tails; more even distributions are more frequent and are in the center of the distribution. The standard deviation is a measure of dispersion, with large standard deviations reflecting relatively fewer evenly balanced ("marginal") districts and more lopsided ones. Taylor et al. (1986) show how the standard deviation is shaped by areal clusters of opinion in relation to the district sizes and boundaries. As smaller standard deviations mean more evenly balanced districts, this kind of map will produce more "wasted votes," coming from the losers in these districts (and will also produce larger seat swings from marginal vote swings, a point to which we return in a moment). The addition of more parties can produce even more wasted votes if it means that the winners are carrying districts with less than 50% of the votes, or if it means that there are fewer lopsided victories of any kind. Geographically concentrated parties may not create that effect if they simply mean uneven local contests between different parties.

Of course, as Schattschneider (1942), and no doubt others before him, had been well aware, the problem with achieving nationally proportional outcomes in

systems based on geographic districts is what happens to the votes for the losers in each district. In a SMD system in which the districts are reasonably competitively contested and districts are of equal size, nearly half the votes will be cast by losers in their district. If we counted these losing voters as unrepresented, then we would see a very disproportionate vote-seat relationship, a matter that greatly concerned early PR proponents (e.g., Mill 1958 [1861], p. 111). From this point of view, the amount of disproportionality is measured by the aggregation of “wasted votes”—that is, votes for candidates or parties who lost the district election.

Following Rae (1967), the standard cross-national studies of disproportionality do not simply aggregate the losing voters from all the districts. Rather, they usually assume that party is a nationally meaningful concept for voters, and national vote-party relations define the appropriate representative linkage. Thus it may be that one party will lose in some districts and the other party will lose in others. If one party’s losers are canceled by the other party’s equivalent losers, a SMD-based system could yield a highly proportional outcome, even if it has many closely contested districts. In geographic terms, this can happen if the distribution curve is highly symmetrical. However, a skewing of the distribution, such that one party loses a lot of districts by a small margin, will swiftly create much higher disproportionality. Thus, greater proportionality can emerge from SMD systems either from many highly unbalanced districts or from a very symmetrical distribution of partisan losses. Additional parties within districts will usually reduce proportionality by creating more losers.

This possibility of disproportionate results in one district being canceled by opposite disproportionality in another will, of course, be present in any system with districts—and most real-world PR systems have some kind of geographic districts. But PR systems with large district magnitudes will have fewer unrepresented losers in each district (subject to the number of parties competing, as explained below), and thus will be less dependent on canceling of disproportionality in different districts. Thus, in larger-magnitude districts, the interaction between geography and vote preferences is less important. In small-magnitude district systems it is critical because it will affect the canceling probabilities as well as the proportion of losers in the average district. (One way of understanding gerrymandering is as a practice of drawing the boundaries to preclude an even balance of winners and losers on both sides.) On the geographic distribution effects, see Taylor et al. (1986), Powell & Vanberg (2000), and Taagepera & Shugart (1989).

Lack of equality in the relationship between numbers of voters and numbers of representatives from each district may also affect disproportionality. This lack of equality may stem from the rules of representation themselves (as in the underrepresentation of urban districts in Spain), which is usually called malapportionment. It may also be caused by differential rates of turnout in different districts, as when a labor party gains proportionately greater representation because lower turnout in urban areas means its victories are based on fewer votes. Political geographers’ analysis of bias effects in two-party situations suggests that they can be disaggregated into four elements (see especially Johnston et al. 1999 and references

therein): turnout, malapportionment, third party, and distributional (intentional or unintentional gerrymanders). Although this work has thus far been dominated by scholars studying Britain and New Zealand, this may be changing, as reported in Snyder & Samuels's (2001) review of malapportionment in Latin America.

Too Many Parties

Observers have also long been aware, from various perspectives, that "too many" parties is a problem for representation. Schattschneider (1942, 75ff.) suggested that in SMD plurality systems, the first party was advantaged; the second party was slightly disadvantaged; but additional parties had little chance, and their voters were likely to be un(der)represented, unless they were "sectional" parties. Duverger (1954, p. 374) also noted that effects of FPTP election rules's "exaggeration" of swings to the winner may become "much more capricious" under multiparty competition. The effect of this generalization on aggregate disproportionality depends, of course, on the "additional" parties being weak everywhere; if they have local areas of enough strength to win some districts, this may make up for their underrepresentation in others.

Taagepera & Shugart (1989) show that the effect of too many parties on proportionality is not limited to FPTP systems. Rather, disproportionality tends systematically to increase with more competing political parties. They also observe that as district magnitude increases, so does number of parties, as we might expect from Duverger's Law [which states that FPTP leads to two-party systems (Duverger 1954, p. 217)] and from Rae's findings about election rules and fractionalization of the party system. The effect of district magnitude on the number of parties creates a somewhat off-setting effect on the decline in misrepresentation that greater magnitudes create. Taagepera & Shugart (1989, p. 123) refer to this as a "law of conservation of D (disproportionality)."

Cox (1997) provides an appealing theoretical framework into which to place the work on election rules, number of parties, and disproportionality. Cox draws on a large, purely theoretical literature on strategic voting under different voting rules, as well as on the empirical studies, to construct a model of the "microfoundations" of Duverger's Law. The work of Gibbard (1973) and Satterthwaite (1975) had demonstrated theoretically, as Leys (1959) and Sartori (1968) had suggested from empirical observation, that "strategic voting" (voting for a less preferred party or candidate because it has a better chance of winning) can be rational under any kind of voting system. One way of understanding Duverger's Law (that we expect only two parties under SMD) is as successful coordination to reduce the number of parties to match a reasonable probability of winning the only seat available in a district. Such coordination involves the strategies of party leaders, the election rules, and expectations about voters. In SMD, when more than two parties compete for votes in a district, some kind of coordination failure has occurred, unless balance is very even. Different voting rules create incentives to reduce the number of parties to varying levels. Explicitly, Cox (1997, pp. 31–32, 99ff.) suggests that the number of parties should be reduced to the district magnitude plus one.

When coordination fails, and “too many” parties compete relative to the threshold, we see increased levels of misrepresentation (assuming equivalent cross-district canceling effects). Although any voting system will demand some coordination, the coordination task is greater and the costs of coordination failure are higher in low-district magnitude systems. FPTP is the extreme case, in which a single party may receive substantial votes in many districts and yet fail to carry any of them—thus depriving many voters of representation. Cox’s formulation explicitly provides a theoretical explanation for Taagepera & Shugart’s empirically derived “law of conservation of D (disproportionality)” and the general meaning and consequence of “too many” parties. Perhaps more importantly, it suggests theoretically the conditions (of party objectives, information, expectations, and rules) under which coordination failures should be expected—quite apart from the geographic issues.

The striking failures of large-district PR rules to generate proportional outcomes in a number of the new democracies of Eastern Europe, especially when too many parties compete relative to a fairly low threshold (typically 5%) underline the importance of specifying more exactly how information limitations, party goals, and the lack of expectation constraints operate in new systems. (The failures also emphasize that these are genuine empirical theories not, as sometimes asserted, mere tautological implications of PR rules.)

Standard Theory of Vote-Seat Representation

It now is possible to speak of a standard (though far from complete) theory of vote-seat representation that draws on these empirical and theoretical works. In this theory, the citizens are principals whose preferences are expressed by their (first-preference) vote for political parties. The agents are the collective party representatives in the legislature, regardless of which district chooses them. The comparison is between all the citizen votes and all the legislative seats with various, similar measures of proportionality as the standard of desirable representation. Representation is shaped by the interaction of competing parties, citizen’s choices, and election rules.

Even in this standard form, the vote-seat paradigm is far from exhausted. Despite some excellent work by geographers, the problem of the fit between party support and geographic boundaries seems incomplete. These features are so important in low-magnitude systems that it is difficult systematically to make progress on other effects until they are in hand. The number of parties, which in turn affects disproportionality, is doubtless shaped by internal party organization features and histories (e.g., Kitschelt 1994) and by the opinion and organizational diversity of the society (Cox 1997, Ch. 11; Ordeshook & Shvetsova 1994; GB Powell 1982), as well as by election rules and coordination problems. The inventions of new types of rules, especially those that combine SMD and PR in various ways, create need for theories of party leaders’ incentives that take account of both of these (Moser 1999, Shugart & Wattenberg 2001). Finally, despite some promising leads

(Lijphart 1994, Ch. 6; Shugart 1995; Shugart & Carey 1992), the analysis of interaction between party and voter behavior in the context of multiple levels of elections, especially presidential and legislative elections, has far to go.

Variations on the Basic Vote-Seat Paradigm

Some interesting variations are emerging, which partially violate some (in part normative) assumptions of the standard exemplars but which potentially enrich our understanding of representation of votes into politics. One important variation involves explicitly linking votes to executives or policy makers rather than only to legislatures. If we assume that the legislature is the decisive stage in policy making, and that all legislators have equivalent influence, then it may be satisfactory to compare citizen vote distributions with legislative seat distributions. But if we accept that political and institutional features of the policy-making system imply that at least some legislatures play a relatively small role in policy making, which is rather dominated by the executive, then perhaps citizen vote distributions should be compared with the way those votes are represented among those who effectively make the policies. Pinto-Duschinsky (1998, pp. 123–24) has emphasized the overrepresentation of small parties in some parliamentary governments in PR systems; others have drawn attention to the virtually permanent role in government of large Catholic parties in Italy and the Netherlands from the end of World War II until 1994; still others have noted the near permanent exclusion from government of “extremist” parties of both right and left. Taylor & Lijphart (1985) and Powell (2000) have begun to link party votes to representation of parties in cabinets or policy-making groups.

Some recent work has also challenged the standard assumption in the comparative literature that proportionality is the appropriate way to represent votes in legislatures. Interestingly enough, the bulk of recent American politics literature has assumed that a different relationship is normatively preferable. What Gelman & King (1994) call “responsiveness” of seat changes to vote changes emphasizes amplification of the impact of party vote shifts (around the party average) on party seat shifts in the legislature. This follows in a tradition in American and British political analysis that emphasizes the values of competitiveness and swing ratios (see also Rae 1967, pp. 26–27, 145). Gelman & King (1994, pp. 544–45) explicitly contrast the American concept of responsiveness in amplifying vote shifts to the lesser responsiveness of proportionality as a value (see also Rae 1967, pp. 100–1, on SMD rules and “magnification” of vote shifts). In one of the few studies explicitly to examine vote-seat connections from both views, Katz (1997) considers proportionality and responsiveness as competing democratic virtues. His comparative analysis finds that they “are influenced by much the same factors, but are inversely related” to each other (Katz 1997, pp. 138–42). Powell (2000, Ch. 6) follows a similar line of thought and suggests that “proportional” and “majoritarian” visions of democracy imply different relationships between votes and their legislative (or policy-making) representation (see also Powell & Powell 1978.)

Empirically, he finds that proportional and majoritarian (FPTP and other SMD) systems each perform fairly well by “their own” standards, and quite badly by the standards implied by the opposite vision. This is consistent with Katz’s finding and with the idea of a trade-off in the consequences of election laws. However, good responsiveness in the majoritarian systems usually requires counting the party that wins the plurality of votes as entitled to unshared governing power, since very few parties win vote majorities.

A Fundamental Problem: “Party”

The most fundamental empirical problem with using vote-based approaches to democratic representation lies in the assumptions about the nature of the “political party” itself. The aggregate comparison of citizen vote distributions and legislative (or executive or policy-maker) representative distributions assumes that the same party means the same thing to voters in different districts within a country. This assumption is absolutely essential to a procedure that allows the unrepresented party losers in one district to be compensated by overrepresented party winners in another district. If the same party label means something different in the two districts, then the results of “canceling” across districts will be misleading at best. Parties that are merely coalitions of diverse local notables or regional patrons, or that contain contentious policy factions, may fit the fundamental assumption of party homogeneity across districts rather badly. If the party representatives fail to coordinate in their legislative activity, the problem is compounded. The paradigmatic vote-seat studies, and even their variants, provide few clues as to how one might address this problem, or even what features of the vote or party system one might investigate to see whether the assumption is warranted.

A related problem is that the vote-based approaches do not discriminate between parties on any other basis than votes received. Misrepresentation measures indicate only disproportionality in vote-seat ratios, not whether parties favoring some kinds of policies are advantaged. If a plurality winner (or even second-place finisher) gains a legislative majority because two other parties have split the vote, we have no idea whether the winner is substantively far from positions favored by the other parties.

Yet, the attraction of vote-seat representation research is not merely the sometimes misleading convenience of its available data. The citizens’ votes do have a special status. The election is the formal authorization step in the principal-agent relationship. Citizens who are markedly underrepresented relative to their votes may well feel that basic standards of democratic equality have been violated. Moreover, the vote does require citizens themselves to aggregate the various concerns they may bring to the election into a single act. It does not require the researcher to pull together these concerns into some semblance of estimated coherence or to assume that one dimension or substantive area, such as the economy, prevails. In this sense, the election reveals the preferences of the citizens with unique authority. Finally, even researchers who wish to begin with citizens’ preferences (see the next section), or to look at governments as well as legislatures, need a theory that

takes account of the way party votes are aggregated under different election rules. For these reasons, at least, the party relationship between votes and seats remains an important feature of democratic representation.

CITIZENS' PREFERENCES AS THE STARTING POINT: THE ISSUE-CONGRUENCE PARADIGM IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

Studies of substantive representation tend to assume that a serious claim of contemporary democracies is that policy makers should and do take account of what the citizens want. From this point of view, vote-based studies of representation capture, at best, only part of the complex processes that link citizens' preferences and the policies of their elected policy makers. We need a theory of voting behavior and empirical research to show the conditions under which policy preferences shape vote choice. Furthermore, even if votes are shaped by substantive policy preferences rather than candidate personalities or individual pay-offs, they are also constrained by the available choices offered by candidates and parties. If some electoral rules and party systems offer more complete sets of choices, the votes may be a better guide to underlying preferences in these systems than in others (Lijphart 1994, p. 97). Thus, we also need a theory of party policy promises in the election campaign and empirical research on party strategies.

Miller-Stokes as Exemplar in Substantive Representation Research

Miller & Stokes (1963) used a public opinion survey to ascertain the issue positions of citizens in different U.S. congressional districts and linked these to the preferences, perceptions, and behavior of the representatives of those districts. Their seminal article, "Constituency Influence in Congress," offered several alternative models of the empirical requirements "to ensure constituency control," addressed directly and thoughtfully the difficulties created by low levels of citizen information, considered relationships across several dimensions of public opinion, and discussed the role of political parties in the linkage process, other factors shaping the behavior of congressmen, and so forth.

Miller & Stokes saw the election as the causal connection that could require representatives to be influenced by citizen opinion. Their empirical analysis indicated, however, that the nature of this electoral connection was different in different policy domains. "The representative relation conforms most closely to the responsible-party model in the domain for social welfare," where the parties usually recruited candidates who differed systematically in their policy stances (Miller & Stokes 1963, p. 371). In this domain, they noted the much greater correlations between district majorities and winners, and negative correlations with losing candidates (Miller & Stokes 1963, pp. 359–60). In the civil rights domain, on the other hand, their primary theoretical solution was to emphasize Congressmen's

and challengers' perception and mutual anticipation of the position held by the majority of citizens in the district.

A decade later, Achen (1977, 1978) demonstrated that correlation coefficients could be misleading estimates of representational connections. Variations within and across districts could constrain the correlations; high correlations could be generated even though the positions of the representatives and citizens were substantively far apart. Achen (1978, pp. 481–94) called for multiple measures that would measure both absolute distances between the positions of constituencies and representatives (“proximity” and “centrality”) and the relative degree to which knowing the citizens' positions allowed prediction of their representatives' positions. The absolute distance measures required, however, that citizen and representative opinions be measured on the same scale, which Miller & Stokes (1963) had not done, and which seemed to preclude comparing absolute district preferences with roll-call behavior (but see LW Powell 1982 for an ingenious solution using perceptions of activists).

Achen's point seems undeniable, but its substantive implementation remains controversial. It is often interpreted as the need to use the same question wording in interviewing both citizens and representatives. Although failure to do this certainly raises cautionary flags about representation inferences (as in Miller et al. 1999 and Kitschelt et al. 1999, discussed below), it is by no means certain that the average citizen and her legislator will interpret an identically worded question in the same fashion. Moreover, when citizen responses are aggregated to the level of district, party, or country, they are much more likely to include guesses and error than are elite responses. This difference creates further difficulties in interpreting levels of correspondence.

Following a different line of concern, Weissberg (1978) showed that Miller & Stokes's measures of “dyadic” representation, which linked district preferences and district representatives, could greatly misstate “collective” representation of the citizenry as a whole within the legislature as a whole. For example, losing citizens' preferences could be represented by legislators from other districts, as in the assumptions of the standard vote-seat studies.

By the late 1970s, the Miller & Stokes article still reigned supreme as the research exemplar for the empirical study of preference representation, but analysis and data collection requirements to extend their findings (longitudinally or comparatively) were severe. No single, simple measure of representation or misrepresentation seemed adequate to describe issue connections. Despite the difficulties, the first comparative fruits of Miller & Stokes's work (often encouraged by them as well as their Michigan colleagues and foreign visitors) began to appear at about the same time as the publication of the methodological strictures.

Applications of the Miller-Stokes Exemplar Outside the United States

It was soon apparent that most representation research in other mature democracies would break fundamentally with one basic element in the Miller-Stokes exemplar:

the selection of the district as the element that identifies which citizens should be linked to which legislators in dyadic representation. Instead, the comparative research focused almost exclusively on political party representatives, rather than the district representative, as the appropriately conceptualized agent. This break appears consciously and explicitly in Barnes's *Representation in Italy* (1977). It was forced in part by the election rules and associated election process in many European countries, in part by the high levels of legislative party discipline in most parliamentary systems.

In large, multimember districts, such as those Barnes was describing in Italy, the district's voters are not collectively choosing a single representative but a set of representatives (about 20 per district in Italy). Voters supporting relatively small parties gain (proportional) legislative representation. Empirically and conceptually, the average citizen preference in the district as a whole was not strongly related to the average preferences of its representatives (Barnes 1977, pp. 121–22). Moreover, as Barnes found when looking at the elite questionnaires, in most cases all the representatives of a particular party gave similar opinions, regardless of geographic district (Barnes 1977, p. 119). This combination of multimember districts and relatively homogeneous party behavior led Barnes and most subsequent analysts to focus on the collective legislative party as the appropriate agent of party voters, who are its principals. In a country such as the Netherlands, in which the whole country is a single district, there was little alternative (Irwin & Thomassen 1975). [Converse & Pierce's (1986) prize-winning work does keep the constituency-individual representative dyad, but they recognize the importance of party connections as critical linkages, documenting the highly, although not perfectly, cohesive party voting of the French Assembly members.]

Following the suggestion in Miller & Stokes (1963) about American representation in the social welfare domain, as well as the apparently natural logic of multiparty competition in Europe, the comparative representation work has been theoretically inspired primarily by some version of the "responsible party government" model of representation (see, e.g., Dalton 1985, pp. 268–71; Converse & Pierce 1986, pp. 698 ff.; Thomassen 1994, 1999). As Dalton points out clearly, voters choosing between parties offering alternative policy packages create a theoretical model of citizen influence to underpin collective voter-representative correspondence (Dalton 1985, p. 278.) Dalton (1985) studied the degree to which candidates for the European Parliament were representative of their party voters on a variety of substantive issues. This study is an excellent example of providing multiple measures of empirical issue representation, emphasizing closeness of voters and representatives (centrism) as well as correlations and regression coefficients, and collective correspondence. Dalton also found PR election rules and party diversity related to centrism.

By the late 1990s, issue correspondence data in the party dyadic version of the Miller-Stokes tradition had been collected for a growing number of national legislatures. Most of the studies presented analysis within single countries: the Netherlands (Irwin & Thomassen 1975), Italy (Barnes 1977), Germany (Farah

1980, Porter 1995), France (Converse & Pierce 1986), Australia (McAllister 1991), Britain (Norris 1995), Sweden (Holmberg 1989, Esaiasson & Holmberg 1996), New Zealand (Vowles et al. 1995, 1998), and Norway (Matthews & Valen 1999). [Also see Manion's (1996) remarkable study of semicompetitive elections in China.] They tend to share at least two virtues with their Miller-Stokes exemplar. One is the serious consideration of multiple political issues. They report measurable, but uneven, correspondence between voters and their party representatives across different issues. A second common virtue is concern with the problems of citizen opinion formation, low levels of citizen knowledge and constraint, and how to contrast these with invariably much more sophisticated and structured elite opinions. They offer great insight into the citizen context in each country and sometimes into comparative differences (often contrasting their results with American analyses).

On the negative side, however, the touchstone "responsible party government" model has been offered primarily as a normative model and has usually lacked development of what must be an essential part of any empirical model of party linkage: theory and analysis of party electoral strategies. This lack has probably encouraged failure to consider the possible role of convergent party offerings [along the lines of Downs (1957) or Miller-Stokes's civil rights domain]. A second problem that follows directly from the adoption of the Miller-Stokes dyadic analysis, largely ignoring Weissberg's argument, has been a lack of systematic consideration of how appropriately to aggregate the constituency (individual party) connections into comparison of citizenry and legislature as a whole. It is particularly striking that, in contrast to the vote-seat literature, these studies have seldom worried about the implications of disproportionate seat representation of different parties in the legislature for issue representation.

Moreover, the issue representation studies (like the vote-seat literature) have focused almost exclusively on parties in the legislature. Miller & Stokes's (1963) original article mentioned presidential influence in the foreign policy domain but gave no consideration to the president as an elected representative of the people. Converse & Pierce's (1986) impressive analysis of representation in the French legislature entirely ignores the democratically elected and influential French president. The studies in parliamentary systems have similarly ignored the distinctive influence of the government.

The Explosion of Comparative Substantive Representation Studies

After a long period in which single-country studies were the dominant mode of analysis, it is striking that 1999–2000 witnessed the publication of explicitly cross-national comparative studies involving at least five different research programs in substantive representation. [Also see Miller et al. (2000), a study including citizen-representative issue comparisons in Russia, Ukraine, and Lithuania in 1995.] These cross-national studies have been forced to confront the great methodological difficulties in comparative measurement and specification and have tried to analyze the

effects of system-level features, such as party systems, election rules, and historical context, on issue representation.

Most obviously in the Miller-Stokes tradition is the ambitious collection of original analytic essays edited by Miller himself, *Policy Representation in Western Democracies*, published shortly after his death (Miller et al. 1999). The authors attempt to take advantage of the availability of the emergent group of studies of citizen-legislator representation within five countries explicitly to test cross-national hypotheses derived largely from the “responsible party government” model. However, they conceptualize and measure their representative relationships differently and reach diverse conclusions about, for example, the relative success of more or less structured party systems in creating correspondence on the average issue (see, e.g., Holmberg 1999, p. 94; Pierce 1999, p. 31; Thomassen 1999, pp. 45–51; Wessels 1999, pp. 148–51). It is difficult to tell whether the divergent findings reflect alternative approaches to analysis or the varying, flawed data sets. For example, a number of these studies still use the 1958 Miller-Stokes data set for analyses involving absolute issue distances between citizens and representatives, despite the dissimilarity in the questions asked of citizens and representatives.

In another recent work that builds from the Miller-Stokes tradition, Schmitt & Thomassen (1999) provide a normative model of “responsible party government” that creates issue linkages through parties offering coherent policy choices. This model plays a large role in their conception of the development of “European level” representation. Their surveys of citizens and candidates in the 1994 European parliamentary elections asked questions about self-placement on the left-right scale and three issues of European community politics (employment, open borders, and common currency). Their chapter on “issue congruence” (Schmitt & Thomassen 1999, pp. 186–208), which should be read in conjunction with their earlier article (Thomassen & Schmitt 1997), examines the linkages between party voters and candidates of the same parties on these issues. These two presentations show effectively a very strong relative-responsiveness connection between voters and representatives on the left-right scale, created apparently by voter choices and party alternatives (both national- and European-level parties), consistent with the “responsible party model.” The candidate positions on the three European issues are also strongly structured by their left-right positions; the voter issue positions are far less so. There is some relative congruence between voters and candidates on the substantive issues (as shown by correlation coefficients, etas, and scattergrams), shaped both by party and (more strongly) by country of origin (Schmitt & Thomassen 1999, pp. 200–5; Thomassen & Schmitt 1997, p. 175). But the absolute positions of voters and parties are far apart on the European issues, with most of the candidates far more pro-European on borders and common currency than their voters. These results are, of course, consistent with referenda and opinion polling on these issues. Holmberg’s (1999) chapter “Wishful Thinking,” describing the (mis)perceptions of their voters by Members of the European Parliament, also contains interesting material.

A third recent cross-national analysis in the Miller-Stokes tradition appeared in *Beyond Westminster and Congress: The Nordic Experience* (Esaiasson & Heidar

2000). Holmberg's (2000, pp. 155–180) chapter on "Issue Agreement" utilizes at least eight issue questions (five-point scale questions asked identically of citizens and legislators) to compare positions of party voters and their Members of Parliament (MPs) in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Holmberg also presents dichotomized results showing agreement/disagreement of the majorities of party voters and their MPs. Refreshingly, he reports when citizens and legislatures collectively (as opposed to voter-party dyads) have agreeing/disagreeing majorities.

Holmberg focuses primarily on differences across the political issues, a familiar theme in this literature. He expects better correspondence between voters and party representatives on "salient and politicized issues at the center of political discourse," and he generally finds it on four issues associated with the "left-right" dimension (also see Thomassen 1994, 1999). There seem to be both good absolute and good relative issue agreement. Still, even on these issues, the majorities of citizens and their party representatives in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden did not correspond in 15 of 72 pairs (21%). What is especially striking in Holmberg's data is the near unanimity among each party's MPs. Virtually all the Left and Social Democratic MPs took leftist positions; virtually all the Conservative and Progress MPs took rightist positions. Although there is a general increase in the average support for conservative positions among citizens as we move from left to right across the parties, the citizens are generally more divided than their representatives. For many parties, this implies that there is a substantial minority of voters for each party who favor positions represented in the legislature *exclusively* by representatives of other parties. (Many of the individual country studies have also shown this pattern.)

The most striking failure of correspondence observed by Holmberg was on immigration policy. Voters of most parties (except for Progress and the Swedish Conservatives) were in sharp disagreement with their MPs. [These results are reminiscent of the European policy results reported by Thomassen and Schmitt (Schmitt & Thomassen 1999, Thomassen & Schmitt 1997).] As the issue has been highly politicized, with several parties taking sharp positions, the discrepancy cannot be attributed to voter ignorance of it.

Kitschelt et al. (1999) discuss the emergence of partisan politics in the new democracies of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in the mid 1990s. Although substantive representation is only one theme in their larger analysis (Kitschelt et al. 1999, primarily pp. 309–44), the theoretical formulation and methodological implementation is impressive. (However, their data contain some serious limitations, especially because the issue-distance measures use standardization of different questions asked of citizens and elites.) Kitschelt et al. take to heart Achen's (1978) argument that both absolute (distance) and relative (responsiveness) properties of representation should be considered. In the comparative tradition, they apply these to party voter-representative dyads rather than to geographic districts, and they calculate centrism distances, intercepts, and slopes, as well as correlations as a goodness-of-fit measure. They do not forget to take account of party size in using the statistics as aggregate properties of representation for each issue (and the left-right scale) in each country.

Theoretically, Kitschelt et al. (1999) argue that any significant, positive regression slope (relative responsiveness) constitutes democratic representation. Low absolute distances between average party voter and representative, slopes close to 1.0, and small intercepts (which mean close proportional correspondence on issue positions between party voters and party representatives) imply perfect “mandate representation.” They also suggest two other patterns, “polarized trusteeship” and “moderating trusteeship,” that can be important alternative forms of democratic representation. In polarized trusteeship, the party representatives are more extreme than their respective voters; in moderating trusteeship, the representatives are more centrist than their supporters. Rather than assuming any of these as the correct normative baseline, they suggest the consequences of each for such aspects of democratic performance as citizen mobilization, effective policy leadership, and intensification or diffusion of political conflict (Kitschelt et al. 1999, pp. 80–88, 340).

Kitschelt et al. analyze the origins of observed representative patterns on different issues and countries in terms of the differing legacies of Communist rule found in the different countries. Beyond the cross-national differences associated with these legacies, in general they find strong patterns of party linkage, with polarizing trusteeship especially notable on salient political issues. Moreover, they go on to analyze the distances between governing parties and the mean and median voter, contrasting “universalistic” correspondences with larger distances associated with a polarized trusteeship form of “responsible party government” (Kitschelt et al. 1999, pp. 329–36).

Finally, Powell (2000) examines both procedural and substantive representation in some 20 democracies over the past 25 years, focusing on images and practices in “majoritarian” and “proportional” constitutional designs. The last third of the book analyzes substantive representation at the whole-system (collective) level, using only the left-right scale, which is assumed to be a summary of various specific issues that are salient in the discourse of competition of each country. (Also see associated work in Huber & Powell 1994, Powell & Vanberg 2000.) The work explicitly builds from theories of strategic party competition and government formation in majoritarian and proportional systems. The empirical analysis tries to show where expectations about party connections are realized and where they break down.

Powell & Vanberg (2000) show significantly better correspondence of legislative and citizen medians in low-threshold PR than in higher-threshold PR or, especially, SMD election rules. (They also found this PR advantage using party manifestos to estimate party left-right positions.) The poorer correspondence in the SMD systems apparently resulted from the frequent failure of one or both large parties to converge to the median. Because the number of parties seldom reduced to only two (contra Duverger’s Law), this outcome was consistent with Cox’s prediction of greater coordination problems with these rules (Cox 1997, Ch. 12). However, it is also implied by the “Mays’ Law” line of research and the analysis of internal party incentives that argues patterns of recruitment will generally produce

party representatives who are more extreme than party voters (e.g., Kitschelt 1989, May 1973, Norris 1995). When the disproportional election outcome creates an absolute legislative majority for one of these large parties, the result is a legislative median well off the citizen median. Powell (2000) goes beyond the legislature to show significantly better correspondence between the citizen median and the cabinet government in the proportional systems (as do Huber & Powell 1994).

Both problems and opportunities abound if the new cross-national data sets are to be fully exploited and the conflicting approaches and findings of the 1999/2000 studies are to be unified and reconciled with each other and previous work. Wessels, Kitschelt et al., and Powell claim that we can theoretically explain differences in the causes and consequences of substantive representation. It remains to be seen whether their optimism will be justified. The other authors are much less sanguine.

Structuring Citizen Preferences

Public opinion studies in many democracies have shown that even in educated societies with developed partisan discourse, citizens tend to have only weakly structured preferences. Our ability to predict a citizen's opinion on one issue by knowing his/her opinions on other issues is fairly limited, and the connection between the issue preferences and party preferences is typically not very strong, although it is shaped by partisan competition itself (Granberg & Holmberg 1988). Nonetheless, through aggregation in electoral competition, moderately one-dimensional citizen opinion structures can be linked to partisan representation.

1. The dyadic party-issue congruence studies suggest that relative issue representation (responsiveness) is greater on the issues more strongly linked to the general dimension of party competition. Indeed, this has become virtually a stylized fact (e.g., Holmberg 2000, Kitschelt et al. 1999, McAllister 1991).
2. However, the comparative literature has paid little attention to issue positions that are eschewed by all the parties because they are unacceptable to voters generally, as Miller & Stokes (1963) suggested was the case with the civil rights domain. Under these circumstances, we might find little relative responsiveness on the issue, as the parties do not offer contrasting choices, yet close proximity of voter and representative positions. Influence would emerge from party anticipation of voter response rather than as outcomes from voter choices. Downsian models would expect this in two-party systems, but it could also emerge in multiparty systems if few voters favor a position. [Empirically, the pornography issue in Holmberg's (2000) Nordic systems seems to look something like this.]
3. The studies of issue preferences and partisanship repeatedly suggest that the preferences and positions of party representatives are usually much more structured (i.e., predictable from their partisanship across a wider range of issues) than the preferences of average citizens. In consequence, representatives' opinions on some issues are strongly linked to their partisanship

whereas citizens' opinions are not, a discrepancy that may create serious misrepresentation on these issues. Voters for one party may be better represented by MPs of another party. The long-run electoral dynamics of this situation are unclear (but see Holmberg 1997 for an exploration in Sweden). Moreover, because of their greater consistency, the opinions of representatives will often be, or appear, much more extreme than those of their voters. There may be high levels of relative "responsiveness," such that party representatives are differentiated from each other in the same way their supporters are, but the representatives are much more consistently "left" or "right" than their respective followers. This pattern, which is what Kitschelt et al. (1999) call a "polarized trusteeship" connection, appears in many of the empirical studies (e.g., Holmberg 2000). Consistency across related issues, intensity of preferences, and substantive distance from the "center" on single issues can all contribute to this pattern, but they have different implications for advocacy, conflict resolution, and policy satisfaction.

Thus, whether low levels of specific citizen information are a problem for representation through elections seems to depend on whether citizens can participate in, or relate in a considered way to, a general partisan, programmatic discourse. Emergence and penetration of such a discourse probably depends on both elites and citizens (Zaller 1992). As Kitschelt (2000) argues, it is up to the political parties to bundle together specific issues so as to make general packages of policy alternatives available to citizens (Kitschelt 2000; similarly, see Esaiasson & Holmberg 1996 on "representation from above"). Aldrich (1995) suggests that this is one of the two fundamental functions of political parties. Reflecting on early experiences of democracy, Bryce (1921, 1:119) observed that no large democracy had been able to do without political parties as the vehicle for organizing and structuring elections.

However, parties' incentives to do this are strengthened or weakened by the presence or absence of personalistic elements in the election rules, nationalization of communication patterns and information, and power relationships in the society (Kitschelt 2000). Research on the emergence of a national partisan discourse must be an item on the agenda of substantive political representation studies.

A Fundamental Problem: Multidimensional Preference Representation

Perhaps the most serious lacuna in comparative studies of preference representation is the absence of both theory and empirical analysis in multidimensional context. In terms of policy advocacy, one would expect that PR election rules with large magnitudes and multiple political parties should be able to represent a multidimensional citizen preference configuration in the legislature. Thomassen's (1999, p. 46) analysis of the self-placement of Dutch voters and MPs on economic policy and abortion issues suggests just this kind of multidimensional correspondence. In a more limited way, we see some specific parties apparently reflecting such

multidimensionality on the immigration (Left and Progress parties) and pornography (Christian parties) issues in the Nordic countries (Holmberg 2000). It would seem to be more difficult for a system with small magnitudes and few parties to do this (see McAllister 1991 on the Australian configuration). However, we lack systematic comparative empirical studies. When we move beyond policy advocacy to policy choice, the situation is even murkier. Theoretically, social choice theory seems to show that under majority voting rules a multidimensional preference configuration can yield almost any configuration of outcomes. This situation seems to imply not only instability in the processes but lack of a normatively preferred outcome against which to assess empirical results.

Additional Representative Connections

Limited space precludes discussion of several other, less extensive research programs that have investigated other elements that shape citizen–policy maker connections. One of these is analysis of “social” or “symbolic” representation, which focuses on demographic correspondences, such as gender, race, and class, between citizens and their representatives (e.g., Norris 1996, Vowles et al. 1998). Another is the analysis of “accountability,” emphasizing conditions under which voters penalize policy makers for poor performance (variously measured) in office (e.g., Cheibub & Przeworski 1999; Powell & Whitten 1993; Przeworski et al. 1999). Moreover, a full analysis of democratic representation must incorporate the other forces that shape the making and implementation of public policies, as well as citizens’ responses to these. Research on the role of campaign commitments, such as candidate promises and party manifestos, in government policy making (Klingemann et al. 1994, Royed 1996, Stokes 1999, Thomson 2001) has begun to elaborate these stages of representation. Studies of the impact of political parties on public policies in democracies also constitute a large research program that merits extensive consideration in any complete treatment of democratic representation (see Imbeau et al. 2001 for the references and the meta-analysis of the findings of such studies).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The electoral system studies and the policy representation studies have each made “progress” in the way that we might expect from the paradigm/research program view of scientific progress (Kuhn 1970, Lakatos 1978). That is, they have made progress by converting a general problem to very specific, self-defined, self-limited research programs. The vote-seat studies have not worried about how to estimate voter preferences and the intricacies of greater structure in elite preferences. They have made progress on their own terms by assuming that all we want to know about citizens is how they voted, and examining the consequences of those votes interacting with rules, geography, and partisan competition. Issue correspondence studies, on the other hand, have seldom worried about election rules and collective

preference aggregation; the simplifications of dyadic correspondence have allowed them to concentrate on the problems of preference comparisons.

Substantively, our understanding of the larger problem of political representation, even constrained to the empirical connections between voters and legislators, eventually needs to incorporate results from both lines of research. We can see that vote-seat analyses that take no account of the differing meanings of "party" to different voters, or that do not differentiate between centrist and extremist parties, are neglecting some important questions and contexts. We can see that dyadic issue comparisons that ignore artificial and distorted legislative majorities are missing important parts of the larger picture. Examination of the Australia, Britain, and New Zealand studies suggests not only that the respective Labour, Conservative, and National MPs are more extreme than their own voters on many issues, especially those linked to the primary "left-right" dimension of competition, but also that vote-seat distortion gave their parties (disciplined) majorities even further from the median citizen (see tables in McAllister 1991, Norris 1995, Vowles et al. 1995). The shift in New Zealand to PR in 1996 did not greatly change the relationship between party voters and their representatives, but it greatly lessened the distortion of party representation and apparently improved the fit between the legislative median as a whole and the average voter on issues associated with left-right competition (see Vowles et al. 1998, pp. 2,143–50). Overviews of political representation and even, eventually, the two research programs themselves will need to incorporate elements of both programs. Moreover, each will need fully developed theories of party competition and of voter choice, including understanding the conditions for integrating multiple issues into a unified political discourse.

Similarly, thus far, comparative studies have offered surprisingly little additional articulation of the normative models that created the interest in democratic representation in the first place. However, it is unclear at what point this merging and increased normative range will be helpful for the dynamics of research. Progress on vote-seat representation has probably benefited from the simple assumption that proportional correspondence between votes and seats is a desirable standard. The vote-seat paradigm overlooks normative alternatives, such as majoritarian responsiveness, and ignores the fact that most legislatures make policy (and choose governments) by using a variety of complex voting procedures that cover the range from proportionality to majoritarianism. Complex voting rules, party competition strategies, and geographic configurations have created a sufficiently hard problem when linked even to simple dependent variables. Is it yet time to move beyond them? The thread in the issue correspondence studies that considers "responsible party government" as a normative ideal, rather than as one form of partisan competition that can create correspondence, seems thus far to have been more of a distraction than a help.

Research progress will be determined by the hard work of the scholars "on the ground," not by reviewers. It is the working scholars who will choose where to go next. It is sufficient here to report the continuing progress and vigorous possibilities in these two research programs contributing to the study of political representation.

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A CRITICAL GUIDE TO *BUSH V. GORE* SCHOLARSHIP

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■ **Abstract** This review evaluates the emerging legal and political science scholarship created in the wake of the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Bush v. Gore*, the case that ended the 2000 Florida election controversy between supporters of George W. Bush and those of Al Gore. The article surveys scholars' answers to four central questions: (a) Were the Supreme Court's majority or concurring opinions legally sound? (b) Was the Supreme Court's result justified, even if the legal reasoning contained in the opinions was unsound? (c) What effects, if any, will the case and the social science research it has spurred have on the development of voting rights law? (d) What does the Court's resolution of *Bush v. Gore* tell us about the Supreme Court as an institution?

INTRODUCTION

Emotions ran high during the controversy that followed the U.S. presidential election of 2000. Political inclinations seemed to drive both public and elite opinion regarding how the courts should resolve the various legal challenges brought by Democratic nominee Al Gore, Republican nominee George W. Bush, and others in the battle over Florida's 25 electoral votes.

The pattern persisted after the Supreme Court decided *Bush v. Gore*, a case that struck down, on constitutional equal protection grounds, the recount of ballots ordered by the Florida Supreme Court. The decision handed Florida's electoral votes, and therefore the presidency, to George W. Bush. With a few notable exceptions, political orientation tended to be a very reliable predictor of whether one supported or opposed the result (though not necessarily the reasoning or remedy) of the Supreme Court case.

Legal scholars and political scientists who wrote in the immediate wake of the decision were not immune to this phenomenon. It was not that scholars deliberately skewed their analyses to favor one side or the other. Rather, as Sunstein (2001a)

noted, ideology or political sensibility seemed to color one's view of the salient facts and ambiguous language in the Court's opinion.

The trend continued into 2003, when a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued an order delaying the election that would consider a recall of California governor Gray Davis (*Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project v. Shelley*). The panel said that the selective use of punch-card voting machines, with their allegedly higher error rates, violated the right of equal protection the Supreme Court had established in *Bush v. Gore*.

As a larger panel of the Ninth Circuit reconsidered this ruling (it ultimately reversed, without really deciding the merits of the *Bush v. Gore* claim), scholars took sides again, but with an interesting twist. At least some of those who had supported the Democratic side in *Bush v. Gore* now argued that *Bush v. Gore* should be read broadly to protect voting rights. At least some of those who championed Bush's arguments in 2000 now argued that *Bush v. Gore* had no (or practically no) precedential value, or at least that it should be read narrowly.

I offer these observations to caution that what has been written thus far about the case—including this essay—may lack a more dispassionate perspective that comes with the passage of time and the cooling of emotions. Certainly, reactions to the Ninth Circuit's punch-card ruling (nearly three years after the Florida controversy) indicate that emotions continue to run high. Still, enough has been written about *Bush v. Gore* that it is worth surveying the current landscape and fault lines.

Journalists were the first to emerge with book-length accounts of the 36 days between Election Day and December 12, 2000, when the Supreme Court decided *Bush v. Gore* (Downie 2001, Merzer 2001, Wright 2001). Scholarly chronologies of events soon followed, included within larger analyses of the controversy (Gillman 2001, Greene 2001, Issacharoff et al. 2001, Jacobson & Rosenfeld 2002, Lowenstein & Hasen 2001, Sunstein & Epstein 2001). This essay begins with a description of the salient events that surrounded the emergence of the *Bush v. Gore* decision so as to situate the emerging scholarship.¹ It then turns to the four major questions that *Bush v. Gore* scholarship thus far has addressed:

1. Were the Supreme Court majority or concurring opinions legally sound?
2. Was the Supreme Court's result justified, even if the legal reasoning contained in the opinions was unsound?
3. What effects, if any, will the case and the social science research it has spurred have on the development of voting rights law?
4. What does the Court's resolution of *Bush v. Gore* tell us about the Supreme Court as an institution?

¹Different versions of this brief chronology appear elsewhere (Hasen 2001a, 2003, 2004).

A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON *BUSH V. GORE*

In the days before the 2000 election, everyone recognized that George W. Bush was locked in an extremely close race with Al Gore. In fact, the election was so close that the final outcome depended on the results in Florida, where the initial count showed Bush leading by 1784 votes out of millions of votes cast in the state.²

Florida law provided for an automatic machine recount of the votes in such a close election, and while those recounts occurred, analysts examined more closely both the voting technology and ballot forms used in various Florida counties. Many previously ignored problems with election administration came to light as a result of the controversy. For example, Democrats focused on the “butterfly ballot” used in Palm Beach County, a ballot that listed candidates for president on two pages facing each other with a punch-card vote to be cast along the ballot’s spine. Democrats claimed that ballot design made it unduly likely that voters would cast votes for someone other than their preferred candidate. Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan received 3704 votes in Palm Beach County, nearly 2700 more than he received in any of Florida’s other counties; in addition, ~19,000 ballots were thrown out as “overvotes” (ballots containing votes for more than one presidential candidate).

As the automatic recounts continued, Gore filed an election “protest” asking for a manual recount of the vote in four counties, three of which used punch cards. When it seemed the recounts could not be done in time to meet state deadlines, Gore sought an extension of time for the manual recounts; Republicans argued against the extension and argued that the law did not allow for manual recounts absent a machine error in counting the votes. The Florida Supreme Court issued an opinion allowing the recounts and extending the time to complete them (*Palm Beach County Canvassing Board v. Harris*).

Bush appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. He contended that the Florida Supreme Court’s opinion violated Article II of the Constitution, which provides that “[e]ach state shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors. . . .” Bush argued that the Florida opinion was in essence “new law” and therefore constituted the choosing of electors in a manner other than that directed by the Florida legislature. The Supreme Court issued a brief, unanimous, *per curiam* (unsigned) opinion remanding the case to the Florida Supreme Court for clarification as to whether the opinion was consistent with the Florida legislature’s rules for choosing electors or was potentially in violation of Article II.

After the Florida secretary of state certified Florida’s electoral votes in favor of Bush, Gore filed a separate election “contest,” asking for a selective manual recount of nearly 10,000 undervotes from Miami-Dade County and ~4000 votes set aside in Palm Beach County where their legality was in dispute. (Undervotes

²Bartels & Zaller (2001) explain why models of presidential vote outcome predicting a Gore victory were mostly wrong.

are ballots that fail to record a valid vote for any candidate.) The trial court held that Gore failed to meet the statutory standard for a contest, and Gore appealed to the Florida Supreme Court.

The Florida Supreme Court, in a 4–3 vote, reversed the trial court. The court held that the trial court had applied the wrong legal standards in judging the merits of Gore’s claim (*Gore v. Harris*). The Florida Supreme Court ordered that certain recounts, conducted after the deadline it had set in an earlier case, be included in the totals and that a manual recount of undervotes go forward. The court held that all Florida counties—and not just the counties singled out by Gore—had to conduct manual recounts of the undervotes.

The court further held that in examining the undervotes to determine whether the ballots indeed contained a valid vote for a presidential candidate, the counters should use a “clear intent of the voter” standard, as indicated in Florida statutes. The court failed to be more specific, perhaps out of fear that a more specific standard would violate the U.S. Supreme Court’s understanding of Article II of the U.S. Constitution expressed in the *Harris* opinion (Dershowitz 2001, p. 45).

While a state court judge organized the recount process, Bush filed a petition for a writ of certiorari and a stay in the U.S. Supreme Court. As the recounts began on Saturday, December 9, the Supreme Court, by a 5–4 vote, stayed the Florida Supreme Court’s order, thereby suspending the recount.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral argument on December 11, and late in the evening of December 12, the Supreme Court issued its opinion on the merits of the case. Five justices (Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Kennedy, O’Connor, Scalia, and Thomas) joined in a *per curiam* opinion reversing the Florida Court on equal protection grounds (*Bush v. Gore*). The Chief Justice, joined by Justices Scalia and Thomas, issued a concurring opinion that decided the case under Article II of the Constitution. Four justices dissented (Justices Breyer, Ginsburg, Souter, and Stevens), although Justices Souter and Breyer expressed support for the equal protection rationale (though not the remedy).

The Court majority held that the recount mechanism adopted by the Florida Supreme Court did “not satisfy the minimum requirement for nonarbitrary treatment of voters necessary to secure the fundamental right” to vote under the Equal Protection Clause for four related reasons:

1. Although the Florida court had instructed that the individuals conducting the manual recounts judge ballots by discerning the “intent of the voter,” it failed to formulate uniform rules to determine such intent, such as whether to count as a valid vote a ballot whose chad is hanging by two corners.
2. The recounts already undertaken included a manual recount of all votes in selected counties, including both undervotes and overvotes, but the new recounts ordered by the Florida court included only undervotes.
3. The Florida Supreme Court had ordered that the current vote totals include results of a partial recount from Miami-Dade County. From this fact, the U.S. Supreme Court concluded that the “Florida Supreme Court’s decision thus

gives no assurance that the recounts included in a final certification must be complete.”

4. The Florida court did not specify who would count the ballots, forcing county boards to include team members without experience in recounting ballots. Nor were observers permitted to object during the recount.

The U.S. Supreme Court then declined to remand the case to the Florida Supreme Court to order procedures that satisfied these concerns, as Justices Souter and Breyer urged. The Court held that the Florida Supreme Court had recognized the Florida legislature’s intention to participate fully in the federal electoral process. Under a federal statute, 3 U.S.C. section 5 (designated a “safe harbor” provision by the Court), states that designate their electors by a certain date—in this election by December 12—cannot have their choice challenged in Congress when Congress later counts the electoral votes.

That date [of December 12] is upon us, and there is no recount procedure in place under the State Supreme Court’s order that comports with minimal constitutional standards. Because it is evident that any recount seeking to meet the December 12 date will be unconstitutional for the reasons we have discussed, we reverse the judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida (*Bush v. Gore*).

Three justices issued a concurring opinion, which stated that the recount order issued by the Florida Supreme Court violated Article II of the United States Constitution. The concurrence’s theory was that the Florida Supreme Court’s recount standards constituted new law, in derogation of the exclusive power of the state legislature to choose the rules for selecting presidential electors.

THE LEGAL REASONING OF THE *BUSH V. GORE* MAJORITY AND CONCURRING OPINIONS

The Majority Opinion

EQUAL PROTECTION HOLDING The dominant initial reaction of the admittedly liberal legal academy to the *Bush v. Gore* majority opinion was swift and harsh. More than 600 law professors signed a statement, which appeared in the *New York Times*, accusing the Court of using its power “to act as political partisans, not as judges of a court of law” (see Gillman 2001, Radin 2002).

Critics argued that the *Bush v. Gore* majority applied equal protection law and remedies rules in an unprincipled manner to insure that George W. Bush and not Al Gore would be sworn in as the next American president. As Gillman (2001, p. 189) put it, “The five justices in the *Bush v. Gore* majority are thus the only judges involved in this election dispute who fall uniquely within the category that is most indicative of partisan justice: they made a decision that was consistent with their political preferences but inconsistent with precedent and inconsistent with

what would have been predicted given their views in other cases.”³ The fact that the opinion contained language intended to limit its precedential value only added to these scholars’ concerns (Dworkin 2002a; see also Tribe 2002 for sustained criticism of the Court’s decision).

These scholars were surely right to assert that the Supreme Court had never before extended equal protection jurisprudence to the “nuts and bolts” of elections, an area in which the courts had granted a large degree of local discretion in the past (Hasen 2001a).⁴ Indeed, in the aftermath of the *Bush* opinion, virtually no one defended the Court’s equal protection analysis as a principled application of prior precedent (Dworkin 2002a, pp. 9–10; but see Lund 2002 for the most sustained—though strained—effort). At best, *Bush* was a considerable stretch of existing precedent in the context of a highly charged political case (Pushaw 2001).

But *Bush v. Gore* fits a pattern of Supreme Court regulation of the political process that dates back to the 1960s (Hasen 2003). Warren Court cases venerated by the liberal academy, such as *Baker v. Carr* (which allows courts to entertain challenges to malapportioned districts) and *Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections* (which struck down a neutrally applied poll tax), also were cases in which the Court sidestepped or overruled earlier contrary authority. In terms of affecting political outcomes, the reapportionment revolution ushered in by *Baker v. Carr*, *Wesberry v. Sanders*, and *Reynolds v. Sims* is at least as momentous as the political changes wrought by *Bush v. Gore*.

A few scholars have attempted to rehabilitate the legal analysis of *Bush v. Gore*. Rehabilitative efforts reconceive the problem with the Florida Supreme Court’s recount rules as one of “due process” (Schotland 2002) or procedural fairness. Elhauge (2001) decries “standardless discretion,” and Greene (2001), drawing on First Amendment cases, refers to “unconstrained discretion.” The Florida court’s failure to enunciate a uniform standard for the recounting of votes, this argument goes, would have led to an arbitrary outcome in the recount because different vote-counting officials, both within and across counties, could apply different standards to the same question. These scholars emphasize that recount decisions were to be made initially by partisan decision makers rather than by neutral election-law officials, by judges elected on nonpartisan ballots, or by machines.

REMEDY Many scholars with some sympathy for the Court’s equal protection holding have vehemently attacked the Court’s decision on remedy. The Court could have remanded the case to the Florida Supreme Court to issue a recount

³Dershowitz (2001, p. 68) further argues that the decision to end the recount created a larger equal protection problem than it solved by not recounting valid votes for president on ballots that were misread by the vote-counting machines.

⁴The Court appeared to create the new equal protection right using the language of “strict scrutiny,” potentially making it difficult for local jurisdictions in the future to engage in meaningful and appropriate variation in their practices of election administration (Briffault 2001).

standard comporting with the newly announced equal protection right. If, indeed, the Court believed that strict scrutiny applied to questions of how to count votes (see footnote 4), it is odd that the Court allowed a federal statute setting a time limit for counting electoral votes to trump the right to have votes counted according to a uniform vote-counting standard (Hasen 2001a; see also Green 2001, pp. 121–25).

The due process/procedural fairness rehabilitation does not remove the remedy problem, and some rehabilitative scholars, e.g., Schotland (2002), do not defend the remedy. Critics assert that procedural problems would have been solved in the course of a recount; the state trial judge whom the Florida Supreme Court charged with supervising the statewide recount could have insured uniformity of counting standards (Chemerinsky 2004, p. 95). The argument is difficult to assess because the counting never took place, and we do not know what kind of supervision that trial judge would have or could have exercised to resolve disparities in vote-counting rules within or among counties.

Moreover, the counterargument goes, after remand the Florida Supreme Court could have solved due process problems by adopting a uniform vote-counting standard and taking discretion away from ballot judges. Elhauge (2001) argues that this would have been no solution because the Florida court would have chosen a standard with knowledge of which standard would help Gore or Bush. Elhauge's argument incorrectly assumes the Florida court had adequate information to help one side or the other if it wanted to do so; it is belied by retrospective analyses (see footnote 8) showing that the recount standards advocated by Gore would have helped Bush and the recount standards advocated by Bush would have helped Gore.

Some conservatives joined liberals in attacking the Court's remedy. McConnell (2001, p. 118), for example, wrote a piece called "Two-and-a-Half Cheers for *Bush v. Gore*," leaving off the last half-cheer for the Court's remedy. Those who defend the remedy tend to take the view that pragmatic reasons, rather than equal protection problems, justify the Court's decision in the case, an issue I return to in Part II.

The Concurring Opinion

The three most conservative justices on the Supreme Court—Chief Justice Rehnquist and Justices Scalia and Thomas—both joined in the majority opinion on equal protection grounds and issued a separate opinion on the alternative ground that the Florida Supreme Court's decision violated Article II of the Constitution by taking away the power to choose presidential electors from the Florida legislature.⁵ These Justices stated that the Florida Supreme Court's interpretation of Florida election law was so far from the accepted rules of statutory interpretation as to constitute "new law" improperly empowering the Florida court, rather than the

⁵Abramowicz & Stearns (2001), applying public choice theory, suggested that these three Justices joined in the majority opinion because otherwise there would have been a majority of Justices rejecting both the equal protection rationale and the Article II rationale.

Florida legislature, as the ultimate arbiter of the rules for choosing presidential electors.

The concurrence echoed the Supreme Court's unanimous decision in the first Florida election case, *Harris*, where the Court suggested that the state legislature's decisions on the means of choosing presidential electors trumped even the Florida constitution's provisions governing the right to vote.

Conservative commentators who approve of the Supreme Court's result give more support to this argument than to the equal protection rationale offered by the *Bush v. Gore* majority (Posner 2001a,b; McConnell 2001). Epstein (2001) is probably the strongest supporter of the Article II rationale. Calling the equal protection rationale "a confused nonstarter at best, which deserves much of the scorn that has been heaped upon it" (Epstein 2001, p. 14), Epstein believes a constitutional violation occurs when "the state court's interpretation [of the legislative provisions governing the choosing of presidential electors] does not fall within the boundaries of acceptable interpretation, but rather represents what must be called, for want of a better term, a gross deviation from the scheme outlined in the statute" (Epstein 2001, p. 20). Epstein then sets forth his views on how the Florida Supreme Court opinions fell on the wrong side of this line [but see Kramer's (2001) defense of the Florida Supreme Court's analysis].

Attacks on the Article II interpretation come in two varieties. Some argue that the scope of Article II has itself been misinterpreted, that at least historically it was not understood to favor state legislatures to the exclusion of state courts or state constitutions (Smith 2001). Others argue that the Florida Supreme Court's interpretation of Florida law did not violate Article II: "Although the principle underlying the Rehnquist concurrence is sound, the application is bewildering. The Florida Supreme Court's construction of Florida law, while in no way dictated by precedent or the plain language of the statutory scheme, was at a minimum, plausible" (Krent 2001, p. 497).

DEFENDING AND ATTACKING THE RESULT IN *BUSH V. GORE*⁶

The analysis in the previous section illustrates some of the difficulties that the Supreme Court faced in resolving the Florida election dispute. The Court could have avoided these difficulties by denying review; review of the Florida Supreme Court's decisions was entirely discretionary under the Supreme Court's certiorari procedure. Indeed, few predicted before Court intervention that the Court would enter the dispute (Tribe 2002, p. 150).

A number of scholars have argued that the Court was wrong to intervene. Had the recount ordered by the Florida Supreme Court taken place and had the Florida

⁶A portion of this section appeared in slightly different form in Hasen (2001b).

courts declared Gore the winner, entitled to a slate of electors from Florida, it seems likely that the Florida legislature would have chosen an alternative Bush slate of electors, and the question would have been resolved by Congress. These scholars contend that the Florida election controversy raised a political question best resolved by the political branches—the Florida legislature and Congress under the Electoral Count Act (Garrett 2001, Issacharoff 2001).

That prospect of political resolution, however, worried some scholars, e.g., Sunstein (2001b, p. 221), and was anathema to others. Judge Posner (2001a,b) has offered the most sustained argument that the Supreme Court's intervention and decision to stop the recount was a pragmatically defensible position that averted a constitutional crisis. Posner rejects the *Bush v. Gore* majority's equal protection analysis and expresses tepid support for the Article II argument. His main argument is the pragmatic crisis-prevention rationale: Had the recounts continued, argues Posner (2001b, p. 134), "what could have ensued is fairly described as chaos, providing a practical argument in favor of the Court's remedy."

Posner sets out several alternative scenarios—such as Florida presenting Congress with rival slates of electors—that could have occurred. He is right to recognize the possibility, although there was a significant possibility (seriously discounted by Posner) that Bush would have been declared the winner of the recount or that the Florida courts would have ended the recounts because of lack of time to complete them. Posner even spins out a far-fetched scenario in which former Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers is appointed acting president, as those in the constitutional line of succession decline or are found ineligible to serve in office.

The most likely scenario, as Posner perhaps would admit, is that Congress would have counted electoral votes from each state and resolved the dispute before January 20, 2001, when the new president was to take office. Although some argue that Congress would probably have supported Bush, Marshall (2001, p. 803) suggests that Congress might have deadlocked on choosing a slate of electors.

How is political resolution a crisis? Posner (2001b, p. 138) suggests that the "new President would have started behind the eight ball, with an irregular and disputed accession, an abbreviated term of office, and no transition." At another point, Posner suggests there might have been rioting in the streets, although that seems highly unlikely. He also suggests that congressional resolution of the crisis would have been seen as illegitimate by the American public.

Posner's argument is unconvincing. It is not clear how weakened a presidency Bush would have assumed (of course, no one could have foreseen the events of September 11, 2001). After all, the United States had survived Gerald Ford with no transition at a time of much greater political turmoil. Ultimately, Posner's analysis exhibits an unhealthy fear of politics and lack of faith in the American people's ability to abide by a political solution made by the political branches. As discussed below, Posner in this regard has much in common with the *Bush v. Gore* majority. Posner (2001b, p. 145) is gratified that the Supreme Court imposed a political solution and provided a "tincture," or veneer, of justice.

BUSH V. GORE, SOCIAL SCIENCE, AND THE SCOPE OF VOTING RIGHTS

A smattering of social science research on voting technology existed before the 2000 election controversy introduced the term “hanging chad” into the American lexicon (see, e.g., Saltman 1975). But research on voting technology, ballot design, and related issues exploded after the controversy revealed that these seemingly technical matters had real-world political implications.⁷

On the question of ballot design, Wand et al. (2001) convincingly argue that the Palm Beach County “butterfly ballot” design effectively cost Al Gore the election if everything else is held constant. To be sure, it was the combination of a bad ballot design and an extremely close race [what Ceasar & Busch (2001) call “the perfect tie”] that led to such a result, but there are enough close races across the many federal, state, and local elections that the issue of ballot-design effect on voter choices continues to attract attention.

Social scientists have paid even more attention to the question of voting technology. The *Bush v. Gore* litigation revealed that voter or tabulating-machine error was a significant problem with balloting and that error rates varied with the type of voting technology used.

Much scholarship focused on punch-card technology. In jurisdictions that have adopted punch-card technology, voters use a stylus to punch a perforated piece of paper (or “chad”) out of a ballot card. The chad punched out corresponds to the candidate or issue the voter prefers. The tabulating machines then read the holes in those cards to tally votes.

Post-Florida studies by the Caltech-MIT Voting Technology Project (2001) and others revealed that punch-card voting technology was among the least reliable for correctly counting voters’ intended votes.⁸ Paper ballots and optical scan machines with error correction at the polling places showed the lowest error rates. Social

⁷Al Gore’s ability to capture the popular vote but lose the Electoral College has spurred some political scientists to consider Electoral College reform, though the prospects seem dim (see Polsby 2002).

⁸The National Organization for Research (NORC) at the University of Chicago, on behalf of a consortium of news organizations, conducted a manual recount of the ~180,000 Florida ballots cast in the 2000 presidential election that failed to record a valid vote for president (NORC Florida Ballot Project 2001). Using the NORC data, Calmes & Foldessy (2001) reported that Bush would have won Florida by 493 votes if the statewide undervote counting ordered by the Florida Supreme Court had continued, and by 225 votes if hand recounts had been conducted in the four counties picked by Gore. Keating & Balz (2001) reported similar conclusions and added that if Gore had found a way to trigger a statewide recount of all disputed ballots, or if the courts had required it, the election may have gone to Gore by “the narrowest of margins.” Barstow & Van Natta (2001) reported the results of a separate *New York Times* study showing that 680 late-arriving absentee ballots did not meet Florida’s standards yet were still counted. A vast majority of those flawed ballots were accepted in counties that favored Bush.

scientists have begun to consider the precise reason why punch-card technology causes high error rates, as well as a related question: whether race correlates with voter error when punch-card machines are used (cf. Alvarez et al. 2004, Ansolabehere 2002, Ansolabehere & Stewart 2004, Herron & Sekhon 2004, Tomz & Van Houweling 2003).

No consensus has yet emerged on the issue. Tomz & Van Houweling (2003) find that the use of lever and electronic voting machines, compared to punch cards and optically scanned ballots, considerably lessens the gap between African-Americans and whites in the percentage of overvotes. The analysis suggests the elimination not only of punch cards but also of optical scanning machines, whose reliability rates (at least in those poll sites with error-correction technology) have been relatively high. Herron & Sekhon (2004), in contrast, provide evidence that many African-American nonvotes are intentional and depend in part on the absence of a black candidate on the ballot.

The issue of punch-card error attracted renewed attention when the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed suit during the 2003 California gubernatorial recall race. The ACLU sought to have the election delayed until California could replace the punch-card technology used in six California counties, including its largest, Los Angeles. Plaintiffs argued that the selective use of punch-card voting in some but not all jurisdictions violated the constitutional right of equal protection established in *Bush v. Gore*.⁹ A three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit initially accepted the argument and ordered a delay in the election, but a larger (en banc) panel of the same court later overturned this result (*Southwest Voter Education and Registration Project v. Shelley*). The California recall race was not close, and so the choice of voting technology did not appear to affect the outcome of the race.

The recall litigation was not the first post-*Bush v. Gore* court challenge to the use of punch-card voting. California, Florida, Georgia, and Illinois agreed to phase out punch-card voting in the face of such a challenge. The recall litigation arose because California's settlement did not require the phase-out until March 2004. The Illinois case settled after a federal district court held that the selective use of punch-card technology could violate *Bush v. Gore*'s equal protection claim (*Black v. McGuffage*).

The legal question that voting technology research raises is the extent to which *Bush v. Gore*'s admonition that it is impermissible for a state to "value one person's vote over that of another," combined with new social science, opens a window for more litigation to ensure better (or at least more equal) voting rules and equipment.

Hasen (2004) argues that the Supreme Court opinion opened a window for plaintiffs who seek voting reform to use social science to force jurisdictions to make certain changes in their voting rules or equipment (see also Mulroy 2002). The window may soon close if the Supreme Court revisits the meaning and precedential

⁹As a matter of disclosure, I filed an amicus brief on my own behalf supporting the ACLU's position in this litigation. I also consulted for the city of Compton in the litigation described below.

value of *Bush v. Gore*. Schwartz (2002, pp. 681–82) puts forward an even more ambitious attempt to use equal protection law to force jurisdictions to make such changes, urging the courts to go beyond a generous reading of *Bush v. Gore*. The en banc Ninth Circuit's decision to let the California recall election go forward as scheduled demonstrates that even if *Bush v. Gore* leaves open the window for election reform, it does not necessarily allow changes in the midst of an election process already under way.

Litigation to spur election reform at least sometimes has salutary results for political equality, but the picture is not all rosy. The danger is that courts will become too enamored by the social science research and lose sight of the need for legally significant proof. One unprecedented recent example occurred in an election contest involving the small southern California city of Compton. The trial court held that the Compton city clerk violated state law by placing one candidate's name before the other candidate's name in violation of the "randomized" alphabet order that state law mandated be used for the election. The court credited the testimony of Krosnick that it was extremely likely that the ballot order affected the outcome of the election. Krosnick et al. (2004) finds that candidates listed first on the ballot gain an advantage in voting. Surprisingly, the judge did not simply order a new election; she ordered the losing candidate declared the winner and immediately sworn into office (Hasen 2004, p. 195). A California appellate court reversed the verdict of the trial judge and reinstated the original winner, but the trial court decision serves as a reminder of the dangers of social science conjecture in the courtroom.

The Florida election controversy and subsequent social science research also produced a legislative response. In addition to action in the states, in 2002 Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA, 42 U.S.C. §15301, 116 Stat. 1666). Among other things, that statute provides funds for jurisdictions to phase out punch-card voting technology. Future scholarship will no doubt consider HAVA's effect on achieving parity in voting systems, assuming (a big assumption at the time of this writing) that Congress appropriates sufficient funds to pay for HAVA's programs.

BUSH V. GORE AND THE SUPREME COURT AS AN INSTITUTION

Not surprisingly, scholars have attempted to put the Supreme Court's *Bush v. Gore* decision into a larger institutional context. Given the scorn that many liberal scholars have heaped on the opinion, it is not surprising that some see the decision as little more than a partisan (i.e., Republican-majority) court advancing its agenda through *Bush v. Gore* and other antidemocratic (and sometimes anti-Democratic) opinions. Raskin (2003, p. 3) offers the most forceful and sustained version of this argument: "Far from rendering neutral justice, the conservative Court has developed racial and partisan double standards to govern democratic politics."

Raskin thus ties *Bush v. Gore* to other election law cases he views as anti-democratic—especially the *Shaw v. Reno* line of cases (discussed below) holding certain racial “gerrymanders” unconstitutional and the Court’s recent third party cases, where the Court has lately allowed states affirmatively to favor the two-party system. Raskin’s critique is strong, although convincingly attributing partisan motives to the Justices is difficult even in *Bush v. Gore* (Kramer 2001, p. 150).

Moreover, Raskin’s analysis could benefit from a comparison with election law cases predating the Rehnquist Court. He remarks that liberals “starstruck by the Warren Court” forget that “[w]e cannot really expect the Court to render active justice for us” (Raskin 2003, p. 2). But he fails to consider the extent to which the Warren Court was similarly activist and unmoored from constitutional text or history, only in a way that favored a more liberal political agenda. Hasen (2003) describes a series of Warren Court voting-rights precedents that overturned existing precedents or advanced novel constitutional interpretations.

Pildes (2001, 2002) offers a more nuanced view of what he terms the constitutionalization of democratic politics, in which the Court sees itself as the ultimate arbiter of the form of political processes acceptable in the United States. “Constitutional law now sharply constrains the possibilities for experimentation with the forms of democratic politics; constitutional law now limits the structural changes through which disaffection with the current practices of democratic politics can be given institutional expression” (Pildes 2002, p. 155). Pildes is surely right to assert that much more election law has been constitutionalized in recent years. During the period 1901–1960, the Court decided an average of about 10 election law cases per decade. After the Warren Court’s revolution in the 1962 *Baker v. Carr* case, that number jumped to about 60 per decade (Hasen 2003, p. 1).

Pildes also admirably describes the recent direction of constitutional change. Tying *Bush v. Gore* to cases such as *California Democratic Party v. Jones*, which struck down California’s blanket primary, Pildes (2002, p. 183) identifies on the Court a Posnerian fear of politics. “[T]he Court’s actions seem to manifest anxiety about the capacity of other institutions, including political ones such as Congress, to avoid unleashing what the Court might well have perceived as ‘the furies of civil commotion, chaos, and grave dangers.’”

Pildes is disturbed less by the Court’s activism than by its agenda. He laments Court intervention on grounds other than that “political insiders are manipulating the rules of democracy for self-interested reasons.” Pildes (2002, p. 186). Endorsing a process-oriented approach to election law cases (see Ely 1980), Pildes has called for an activist Court to “destabilize political lockups in order to protect the competitive vitality of the electoral process” and to preserve an “appropriately competitive political order” (Issacharoff & Pildes 1998), a structuralist project that assumes “unlimited judicial wisdom” (Hasen 2003, p. 155).

Indeed, others see in *Bush v. Gore* the Court already embarking down the structuralist path, being less concerned with individual or group rights than with the proper functioning of the political process. Karlan (2001) ties the *Bush* equal protection holding to the earlier controversial 1993 Supreme Court case *Shaw*

v. *Reno*. In *Shaw*, the Court for the first time recognized a cause of action for an “unconstitutional racial gerrymander,” in which a jurisdiction draws lines in redistricting that take race into account in a way that conveys to those in the district that there is separation on the basis of race. In *Shaw*, the bizarre shape of the district seemed key to evaluating this “expressive harm,” but in later cases the Court majority (the same five justices as in the *Bush* majority) explained that the problem occurs when race is the “predominant factor” motivating the legislative body’s redistricting decision (*Miller v. Johnson*).

Karlan (2001) sees *Shaw* and *Bush* as raising “structural equal protection” claims. Rather than remedying state discrimination in voting rights that affect the political power of individuals or groups, these cases are concerned about the proper structure or function of the political process. “In this newest model of equal protection, the Court deploys the equal protection clause not to protect the rights of an individual or a discrete group of individuals, particularly a group unable to protect itself through operation of the normal political processes, but rather to regulate the institutional arrangements within which politics is conducted” (Karlan 2001, p. 78).

No discussion of the Supreme Court as an institution post-*Bush v. Gore* can ignore the question of the decision’s effect on the Court’s legitimacy. There appears to be a fundamental divide between the mostly liberal legal academy and the American public, with the academy much more skeptical of the Court’s performance in 2000 than the public has been [but Yoo (2001, pp. 226–27) notes at least an initial partisan split among the public]. Ackerman (2002) dedicated an entire book to the question of the Court’s legitimacy in light of *Bush v. Gore*, and most contributors to Ackerman’s volume have serious questions about the Court’s performance on December 12, 2000. An exception is Fried (2002), a conservative, who disputes Ackerman’s points on legitimacy. Ackerman’s analysis seems fundamentally disconnected from the willingness of the public—apart from some core Democratic activists—to move on and not connect the Court’s legitimacy to the case. Gibson et al. (2003) finds little if any diminution of the Court’s legitimacy in the aftermath of *Bush v. Gore*, even among African-Americans.

The main public manifestation of disputes over the Court’s legitimacy in light of *Bush v. Gore* has been to embolden Democrats to block more of Bush’s judicial nominees, as Polsby (2002, p. 282) and Gillman (2001) predicted. At the time of this writing, Bush had not yet had the chance to make a nomination to the Supreme Court, and that could well open up the 2000 wounds yet again. In the meantime, the larger political meaning of the Supreme Court’s unprecedented intervention remains uncertain.

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PUBLIC DELIBERATION, DISCURSIVE PARTICIPATION, AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT: A Review of the Empirical Literature

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Key Words civic engagement, citizen participation, political talk, political discourse

■ **Abstract** Many theorists have long extolled the virtues of public deliberation as a crucial component of a responsive and responsible democracy. Building on these theories, in recent years practitioners—from government officials to citizen groups, nonprofits, and foundations—have increasingly devoted time and resources to strengthening citizen engagement through deliberative forums. Although empirical research has lagged behind theory and practice, a body of literature has emerged that tests the presumed individual and collective benefits of public discourse on citizen engagement. We begin our review of this research by defining “public deliberation”; we place it in the context of other forms of what we call “discursive participation” while distinguishing it from other ways in which citizens can voice their individual and collective views on public issues. We then discuss the expectations, drawn from deliberative democratic theory, regarding the benefits (and, for some, pitfalls) assumed to derive from public deliberation. The next section reviews empirical research as it relates to these theoretical expectations. We conclude with recommendations on future directions for research in this area.

INTRODUCTION

A large and growing group of scholars, foundations, and public intellectuals agree with Page (1996, p. 1) that “[p]ublic deliberation is essential to democracy.” The celebration of public deliberation by citizens has a long history that flows from the city-states of ancient Greece to the town hall meetings of colonial

New England to the salons and cafés of Paris to, most recently, internet forums and chat rooms. At least one tradition within democratic theory has long designated public deliberation as a cornerstone of participatory democracy and representative government (Barber 1984; Connolly 1983; Dahl 1989; Dewey 1954 [1927]; Fishkin 1992, 1995; Habermas 1996; Mansbridge 1983).

Public deliberation is also enjoying a renaissance outside of the academy. President Clinton's initiative on race in the early 1990s was premised on the power and value of public discussion regarding a divisive but often submerged issue. Televised initiatives such as James Fishkin's "deliberative polls," presidential debates modeled after town hall meetings, *Nightline's* or *Hardball's* occasional public forums, and even talk shows such as *Oprah* all try to capture the spirit of public deliberation, albeit in ways that are more spectator sport than active involvement for the vast majority of American citizens. For others, the internet holds the potential to blend the advantages of face-to-face discussion with the scale and convenience of modern communication technology. Public deliberation models of varying stripes have been supported by foundations and nonprofits such as Carnegie-Mellon, Kettering, the Pew Charitable Trusts, Harwood, Benton, and the Study Circles Resource Center, resulting in literally thousands of local and national deliberative forums on hundreds of issues, from economic development to crime to social security to campaign finance reform (Jacobs et al. 2000).

As Chambers (2003, p. 307) notes, "It is now commonplace to talk about the deliberative turn in democratic theory. . . . Indeed, this turn is so striking that it has spawned a small industry of review articles and edited volumes attempting to sum up its meaning and content." Unfortunately, empirical research on deliberative democracy has lagged significantly behind theory. In recent years, however, enough research has been conducted on this topic to warrant assessing what we know—and what we still need to know—about the actual and potential relationship between deliberation and other forms of attitudinal and behavioral engagement in democratic life. This essay provides such review.

We begin by defining "public deliberation," placing it in the context of other forms of what we call "discursive participation" while distinguishing it from alternative ways in which citizens can voice their individual and collective views on public issues. We then discuss the expectations drawn from deliberative democratic theory regarding the benefits (and, for some, pitfalls) assumed to derive from public deliberation. The next section reviews empirical research as it relates to these theoretical expectations. We conclude with some brief thoughts on and recommendations for future directions for research in this area.

WHAT IS PUBLIC DELIBERATION?

The concept of public deliberation emerges from democratic deliberative theory. According to Chambers (2003, p. 308), democratic deliberative theory

begins with a turning away from liberal individualist or economic understandings of democracy and toward a view anchored in conceptions of

accountability and discussion. Talk-centric democratic theory replaces voting-centric democratic theory. Voting-centric views see democracy as the arena in which fixed preferences and interests compete via fair mechanisms of aggregation. In contrast, deliberative democracy focuses on the communicative processes of opinion and will formation that precede voting. Accountability replaces consent as the conceptual core of legitimacy. A legitimate political order is one that could be *justified* to all those living under its laws. Thus, accountability is primarily understood in terms of “giving an account” of something; that is, publicly articulating, explaining, and most importantly justifying public policy. Consent (and, of course, voting) does not disappear. Rather, it is given a more complex and richer interpretation in the deliberative model than in the aggregative model. Although theorists of deliberative democracy vary as to how critical they are of existing representative institutions, deliberative democracy is not usually thought of as an alternative to representative democracy. It is rather an expansion of representative democracy.

Public deliberation, then, is the process through which deliberative democracy occurs. Not surprisingly, however, there is no clear consensus regarding its definition, especially as one moves from theory to practice. In the most formal sense, public deliberation is

discussion that involves judicious argument, critical listening, and earnest decision making. Following the writings of John Dewey, full deliberation includes a careful examination of a problem or issue, the identification of possible solutions, the establishment or reaffirmation of evaluative criteria, and the use of these criteria in identifying an optimal solution. Within a specific policy debate or in the context of an election, deliberation sometimes starts with a given set of solutions, but it always involves problem analysis, criteria specification, and evaluation. (Gastil 2000, p. 22)

Fishkin (1995, p. 41) initially adopts a similarly strict definition but allows for a more realistic assessment by introducing the notion of “incompleteness”:

When arguments offered by some participants go unanswered by others, when information that would be required to understand the force of a claim is absent, or when some citizens are unwilling to weigh some of the arguments in the debate, then the process is *less deliberative* because it is incomplete in the manner specified. In practical contexts a great deal of incompleteness must be tolerated. Hence, when we talk of improving deliberation, it is a matter of *improving* the completeness of the debate and the public’s engagement in it, not a matter of perfecting it. . . .

How far one is willing to take the notion of incompleteness before a particular activity can no longer be considered deliberation is, however, far from clear. For example, Page (1996, p. 5), while acknowledging the “face-to-face ideal” that underlies most traditional notions of deliberation, argues that in modern, mass democracies deliberation is largely “mediated” through professional communicators “who not only help policy experts communicate with each other, but also

assemble, explain, debate, and disseminate the best available information and ideas about public policy, in ways that are accessible to large audiences of ordinary citizens.” Others argue that deliberation need not even involve direct exchanges between two or more citizens but can also occur through the survey process and/or within the thought processes of an individual citizen. For example, Lindeman (2002, p. 199) defines deliberation as “a cognitive process in which individuals form, alter, or reinforce their opinions as they weigh evidence and arguments from various points of view,” whereas for Gunderson (1995, p. 199), “Democratic deliberation occurs anytime a citizen either actively justifies her views (even to herself) or defends them against a challenge (even from herself).”

Additionally, though not always explicitly using the term deliberation, research on other forms of “public talk” (for example, calling into a talk radio show; convincing a friend, neighbor, or coworker whom to vote for; contacting the media or a public official about an issue; informally discussing a community concern) all intersects conceptually with more formal definitions of public deliberation. So too do related linguistic concepts such as bargaining and rhetoric:

Definitions of deliberation and how to distinguish it from other forms of talk—for example, bargaining or rhetoric—vary a great deal among theorists (compare Elster 1997, Bohman 1996 on bargaining; see Remer 1999, 2000 on rhetoric). Furthermore, even when a strong distinction is made between, say, bargaining and deliberation, this rarely means that bargaining is illegitimate or undemocratic. It means that citizens need to deliberate about and decide when and where bargaining is a fair and appropriate method of dispute resolution (Habermas 1996). Generally speaking, we can say that deliberation is debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants. Although consensus need not be the ultimate aim of deliberation, and participants are expected to pursue their interests, an overarching interest in the legitimacy of outcomes (understood as justification to all affected) ideally characterizes deliberation. (Chambers 2003, p. 309)

For the purposes of this essay, we adopt the definition of public deliberation generally used by Gastil and Chambers, allowing for some reasonable degree of “incompleteness” as described by Fishkin. Thus defined, public deliberation is a specific, important, and idealized category within the broader notion of what we call “discursive participation.”

Our conceptualization of discursive participation has five principal characteristics. First, and most obviously, the primary form of activity we are concerned about is discourse with other citizens—talking, discussing, debating, and/or deliberating. Second, we see discourse of this kind as a form of participation. Although analyses of civic and political participation have become more sensitive to the variety of ways in which citizens can act, they seldom include talk as a measure of engagement, focusing instead on activities such as voting, attending

rallies, working for a political party, lobbying, joining and actively participating in voluntary organizations, protesting, and the like (Brady 1999, Ladd 2000, Putnam 2000, Skocpol & Fiorina 2000). But talking in public with other citizens is a form of participation, one that arguably provides the opportunity for individuals to develop and express their views, learn the positions of others, identify shared concerns and preferences, and come to understand and reach judgments about matters of public concern. Such exchanges are a central way of clarifying and negotiating deep divisions over material interests and moral values; they are also critical for publicly airing disagreements that have not been articulated or have been incompletely stated because so many citizens have withdrawn from electoral and legislative politics (Benhabib 1992, 1996; Dryzek 1990; Elster 1998; Etzioni 1997; Gutmann & Thompson 1996; Habermas 1989; Michelman 1988).

Third, discursive participation can include but is not limited to the formal institutions and processes of civic and political life. It can involve private individuals in informal, unplanned exchanges; those who convene for public purposes but do so outside the normal processes of government operations (for example, in such places as libraries, schools, homes, churches, and community centers); and those who are brought together in settings such as town hall meetings of political representatives and their constituents. Fourth, discursive participation can occur through a variety of media, including face-to-face exchanges, phone conversations, email exchanges, and internet forums. Fifth, it is focused on local, national, or international issues of public concern.

Our definitions of discursive participation in general and public deliberation more specifically do not include a number of talk-centric activities: elite-to-elite discourse, such as campaign debates, congressional deliberations, or television talk shows (e.g., *Meet the Press*); citizen-to-elite communications, such as most school board meetings, call-in radio or television shows (e.g., *The Rush Limbaugh Show* or *Larry King Live*), letters to the editor, op-eds, and other contacts with the media; elite-to-citizen communications, such as press conferences or speeches; “self-deliberation” of the sort considered by Lindeman (2002) or Gunderson (1995); or meetings or conversations about personal issues or concerns that are not directly related to broader public issues. Our definitions also distinguish discursive participation and public deliberation from other, arguably related, forms of civic and political engagement such as voting, volunteering, protesting, and direct public problem solving through community organizations.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF PUBLIC DELIBERATION

The sustained and even growing interest in public deliberation is premised on a number of reasonable but largely untested assumptions. According to Mendelberg (2002, pp. 153–54),

If it is appropriately empathetic, egalitarian, open-minded, and reason-centered, deliberation is expected to produce a variety of positive democratic outcomes (Barber 1984; Benhabib 1996; Bickford 1996; Bohman 1996; Chambers 1996; Cohen 1989; Fishkin 1995; Gutmann & Thompson 1996; Mansbridge 1983, 1996; Sunstein 1993; Warren 1992, 1996). Citizens will become more engaged and active in civic affairs (Barber 1984). Tolerance for opposing points of view will increase (Gutmann & Thompson 1996). Citizens will improve their understanding of their own preferences and be able to justify those preferences with better arguments (Chambers 1996; Gutmann & Thompson 1996). People in conflict will set aside their adversarial, win-lose approach and understand that their fate is linked with the fate of the other, that although their social identities conflict they “are tied to each other in a common recognition of their interdependence” (Chambers 1996; Pearce & Littlejohn 1997; Yankelovich 1991). Faith in the democratic process will be enhanced as people who deliberate become empowered and feel that their government truly is “of the people” (Fishkin 1995). Political decisions will become more considered and informed by relevant reasons and evidence (Chambers 1996). The community’s social capital will increase as people bring deliberation to their civic activities (Fishkin 1995; Putnam 2000). The legitimacy of the constitutional order will grow because people have a say in and an understanding of that order (Chambers 1996; Gutmann & Thompson 1996). To summarize, deliberation is expected to lead to empathy with the other and a broadened sense of people’s own interests through an egalitarian, open-minded and reciprocal process of reasoned argumentation. Following from this result are other benefits: citizens are more enlightened about their own and others’ needs and experiences, can better resolve deep conflict, are more engaged in politics, place their faith in the basic tenets of democracy, perceive their political system as legitimate, and lead a healthier civic life.

Others echo all or parts of Mendelberg’s summary of the benefits of a more deliberative public. For example, Page (1996, p. 1) credits deliberation with “en-sure[ing] that the public’s policy preferences—upon which democratic decisions are based—are informed, enlightened, and authentic.” Gastil (2000, pp. 23–25) sees deliberation as a means to more sound individual and collective decisions, as well as to collective action and to greater support for responsive public officials. And Chambers (2003, p. 318) notes that

a central tenet of all deliberative theory is that deliberation can change minds and transform opinions. . . . Although few adhere to the view that deliberation inevitably leads to consensus, many believe that deliberation under the right conditions will have a tendency to broaden perspectives, promote toleration and understanding between groups, and generally encourage a public-spirited attitude. . . . There is a widespread belief that deliberation and publicity associated with deliberation will have a salutary effect on people’s opinions.

Public deliberation also has been singled out as a unique mechanism for producing collective decisions. Policy entrepreneurs as diverse as urban planners and ecologists have embraced public deliberation as a tool for reconciling competing perspectives. For instance, public deliberation has been used as a method for discussing and negotiating such diverse issues as how to safely produce genetically modified organisms, how to stimulate economic development, and how to encourage efficient and environmentally sustainable uses of energy (e.g., Forester 1989, 1999; Kapuscinski et al. 2003). In an era of great divisiveness over policy issues and partisan positions, the traditional tools of electoral and legislative avenues to collective decision making remain essential. But they have also become deadlocked or have alienated large parts of America. Public deliberation has emerged as a potentially valuable way of breaking (or at least sidestepping) this deadlock.

Although the promise of public deliberation has drawn significant attention from scholars and practitioners, there remain deep doubts about its practicality, political significance, and even appropriateness as a core feature of a vibrant democracy. The holding of civic forums is often considered too infrequent and uncommon to deserve much attention, despite the visibility of occasional efforts. Some analysts are concerned that public deliberation is little more than another enclave of “gated democracy”—a practice reserved for the same group of affluent Americans who disproportionately deploy their checkbooks to lure candidates to their favorite positions or who are already well-endowed with social capital. Yet another complaint is that civic forums are “just talk”—idle chat that is cut off from government decision making about important issues. Perhaps most damning, some argue that a majority of citizens lack the skills and/or opportunities to deliberate effectively, that public deliberation can produce unintended consequences. Price et al. (2003, p. 5) summarizes these consequences as “opinion polarization, . . . shifts in opinion in new and risky directions. . . [and] social-normative pressures that can subvert sound judgment. . . [and that] many citizens do not wish for, and indeed might react negatively toward, efforts to engage them more directly in political decision making through deliberation” (see also Brown 2000, Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 2002a, Mansbridge 1983, Mutz 2002, Sanders 1997, Schudson 1997, Sunstein 2001). Put simply, countering the optimism of proponents of deliberative democracy is a strong and persistent suspicion that public deliberation is so infrequent, unrepresentative, subject to conscious manipulation and unconscious bias, and disconnected from actual decision making as to make it at best an impractical mechanism for determining the public will, and at worst misleading or dangerous.

WHAT WE KNOW—AND DON’T KNOW—ABOUT THE IMPACT OF DISCURSIVE PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC DELIBERATION ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Assessing the impact of discursive participation in general, and public deliberation more specifically, on civic engagement is difficult largely because of the scarcity of empirical evidence. Nonetheless, enough relevant research exists to

draw some broad conclusions and to identify areas where further research is needed.

Political Talk as Civic Engagement

Before turning to the relationship between “political talk,” public deliberation, and more traditional measures of engagement, we should note the perhaps obvious point that political talk *is* a type of engagement. Although it is important to understand the impact of public discourse on other indicators of citizenship, much of democratic theory argues that such discourse is a good in and of itself. If so, the extent to which citizens engage in public deliberation and other forms of talk-centered civic and political activities can be used as an indicator of democratic health, much as rates of turnout, charitable giving, volunteerism, or news consumption are often used. But how common is discursive participation?

Eliasoph (1998) suggests that the answer is “not very.” Although 53% of American adults report attending meetings of voluntary associations from time to time during the course of a year (Verba et al. 1995, pp. 62–63), Eliasoph, in her aptly named book *Avoiding Politics*, reports that members of volunteer groups (e.g., high school parent associations) and recreational groups (e.g., fraternal associations) assiduously avoided “public-spirited political conversation.” Even members of activist groups (e.g., a group trying to prevent a toxic incinerator from being built in their neighborhood) studied by Eliasoph were initially hesitant about the value of political deliberation and, once they perceived its value, were more likely to engage in it in the safety of their own company than in more public settings (see also Conover et al. 2003 on the dominance of “private” over “public” discussion).

Although Eliasoph’s research, based on participant observation and depth interviews, finds little evidence of public talk or deliberation, she concludes that this results from a poorly developed public sphere rather than an inherent or natural aversion to politics—a conclusion supported by Skocpol’s (2003) historical research on the professionalization of politics in the United States. However, Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002a) argue that Americans have no desire to be deeply engaged in the political process. Interpreting a wide range of survey data on public attitudes and opinions, they make the case that Americans not only have policy preferences but also have process preferences, and that for most people most of the time, the preferred process is “stealth democracy.” By stealth democracy the authors mean a system in which decisions about what policies to implement, and predecision considerations about (i.e., deliberation of) these policy issues, are left to “objective but largely invisible and unaccountable elites” (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 2002a, p. 239). They elaborate:

Stealth democracy would not seem to be democracy at all. But we believe it is and here is why. While people are not eager to provide input into political decisions, they want to know that they could have input into political decisions if they ever wanted to do so. In fact, they are passionate about this. But the difference between the desire to influence political decisions and the desire

to be able to provide input if it were ever necessary to do so is substantial. (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse 2002a, p. 239)

In the end, however, neither Eliasoph's in-depth but necessarily limited case studies nor Hibbing & Theiss-Morse's more generalizable measures of public attitudes can tell us how much political talk actually occurs in the United States. The reason is that direct survey measures of discursive participation are relatively rare. In his review of political participation measures, Brady (1999) finds only two survey items—discussing politics with friends and trying to persuade someone how to vote—that directly measure citizen-to-citizen talk. Drawing on Barnes et al. (1979), Brady reports that 16% of U.S. adults said they discussed politics with friends “often,” and another 37% reported doing so “sometimes.” Based on National Election Studies (NES) and General Social Survey (GSS) data collected in the late 1980s, 28%–32% of Americans say they have tried to persuade someone how to vote “often” or “sometimes” (Brady 1999, pp. 750–51). Bennett et al. (1995), using NES data from 1984 to 1992, find that between one third and one half of the American public had no discussions about politics in the past week, but that the average number of weekly discussions ranged between about one and a half and two and a half.

More recently, Keeter et al. (2002) found that 60% of Americans age 15 or older reported talking “very often” about “current events or things you have heard on the news with your family or friends” and that another 32% did so at least “sometimes.” In this study, 12% reported that “politics” was discussed “very often” in their homes, with another 35% reporting it was discussed “sometimes.” Keeter et al. found that 33% of those interviewed said that during elections they “generally” talk to people to persuade them whom to vote for, and that 11% have done door-to-door canvassing for a political or social group or a candidate at some point in their life (3% reported having done so in the past year).

Wuthnow (1994), in a study of Americans' growing involvement in what he calls “the small group movement,” found that 40% of adults reported being a member of “a small group that meets regularly and provides caring and support for its members.” Sixty percent of these participants (or 24% of the adult population) described their group's primary purpose as including “discussion.” And 45% of group members (or 18% of the adult population) described the focus of their group as a “special interest” related to political issues or current events.

As part of our own work in this area (Cook et al. 2003, Delli Carpini et al. 2003), we conducted a national survey that included six measures of discursive participation. In our survey, 4% of the adult public reported having participated in an on-line forum to discuss a local, national, or international issue of public concern within the past year; 24% had engaged at least a few times per month in an internet or instant-message “conversation” about such issues; 25% had attended a formal or informal meeting to discuss such issues; 31% had tried to persuade someone how to vote; 47% had tried to persuade someone to alter their point of view on a public issue; and 68% had face-to-face or phone conversations about

public issues at least a few times per month. Nearly one in five (19%) adults had not engaged in *any* of these discursive activities in the past year and only 1% had engaged in all six, but over half (58%) had engaged in two or more, and over one third (36%) in three or more.

Taken as a whole, these survey-based studies suggest that talking about public issues, though perhaps not meeting the expectations of democratic theory, is fairly widespread among the American public, rivaling other forms of civic and political engagement in frequency. Of course, these data reveal nothing about the content or quality of these exchanges. Like other forms of participation, engagement in political talk—especially the more “costly” forms, such as deliberative meetings—appears to be linked to socioeconomic status and education (Bennett et al. 1995; Fung 2001, pp. 89–93), although more work on the predictors of this kind of engagement is needed. This research is largely silent on the benefits that are presumed to flow from a more discursively engaged public.

Social Psychology Research on Small Group Deliberation

Though not intended to directly test the democratic benefits of public deliberation, research such as that on small group decision making (drawn largely from psychology) can provide both a window into this black box and fertile ground for generating hypotheses. Mendelberg (2002) provides an excellent review of these literatures and draws lessons from them regarding the promise and pitfalls of public deliberation about politics.

One literature reviewed by Mendelberg is that on the “social dilemma” produced by the fact that “the pursuit of narrow self-interest, while rational for individuals, is irrational and harmful for the group” (Mendelberg 2002, p. 155). Tellingly, experimental research on this topic has found that face-to-face communication is the single greatest factor in increasing the likelihood of cooperation (Bornstein 1992, Dawes et al. 1990, Ostrom 1998, Sally 1995). This experimental literature suggests that talking allows group members to demonstrate their genuine willingness to cooperate and to determine others’ willingness to do so (Bornstein & Rapoport 1988, Kerr & Kaufman-Gilland 1994, Orbell et al. 1988) and that it helps them to see the connection between their individual interest and that of the group (Dawes et al. 1990, Orbell et al. 1988). In addition, the group consensus that emerges from talk appears to lead to actual cooperative behavior, with more talk leading to more cooperation (Bouas & Komorita 1996). As Mendelberg notes, however, these studies cannot demonstrate that altruism (as opposed to self-interest) is the prime motivator for cooperative behavior.

More troubling, research on complex social dilemmas involving multiple groups suggests that in certain contexts, communication can enhance cooperation among individuals at the expense of that between groups (Insko et al. 1993). Bornstein (1992) found that although communication across groups can increase cooperation between these groups when the group interests are consistent with individual interests, communication within competing groups increases individual and

in-group cooperation at the expense of cooperation across groups. Several studies have found that communication across groups of unequal size can make group differences more salient and thus decrease cooperation (Bettencourt & Dorr 1998, Miller & Davidson-Podgorny 1987).

Research on small groups also suggests that discussion tends to move collective opinion in the direction of the preexisting views of the majority (Moscovici & Zavalloni 1969, Myers & Lamm 1976, Schkade et al. 2000). Two competing hypotheses seem to explain this tendency. The first—social comparison—assumes that holders of minority opinions either genuinely change their views so as to be part of the mainstream (Baron & Roper 1976, Blascovich et al. 1975, Isenberg 1986, Myers 1978, Myers et al. 1980, Turner 1991) or publicly acquiesce while still holding dissenting views in private (Davis et al. 1977, 1988, 1989; Penrod & Hastie 1980). The second hypothesis, which as Mendelberg (2002) notes is more compatible with deliberative theory, is that support for majority opinion tends to increase after group discussion because majorities, simply because of their size, can offer more novel, valid, and/or convincing arguments (Burnstein et al. 1973, Burnstein & Vinokur 1977, Vinokur & Burnstein 1978). Both the “social comparison” and the “effective argumentation” hypotheses find empirical support in the literature, but Isenberg (1986) and Laughlin & Earley (1982) find that the former is more likely to be relevant in discussions about issues that are heavily value laden.

All is not lost for minority opinions in the deliberative process, however. Mendelberg (2002) points out that minority opinion can lead majorities to consider new alternatives and perspectives (Nemeth 1986, Nemeth & Kwan 1985, Nemeth & Wachtler 1983, Turner 1991), to seek out and process new information (Nemeth & Mayselless 1987, Nemeth & Rogers 1996), and to more generally empathize with the minority’s viewpoint (Moscovici 1980). The impact of minority opinion on the majority appears to be enhanced when the former is perceived as novel, objective, consistent, and unified, but not dogmatic (Maass & Clark 1984, Moscovici 1980, Wood et al. 1994); when discussions are not tied to reaching a specific decision (Smith et al. 1996); and when minorities can appeal to or shape norms held by the larger group (Bray et al. 1982, Nemeth et al. 1974, Nemeth & Brilmayer 1987, Moscovici & Mugny 1983, Turner, 1991). Although these findings provide at least indirect support for the democratic possibilities of public deliberation, there is some evidence that speakers “who hold a larger-than-average number of arguments in common with other [group] members”—whether members of the minority or majority—hold disproportionate influence over a group’s decision “regardless of their competence or the quality of their arguments” (Mendelberg 2002, p. 164; also see Kameda et al. 1997).

Mendelberg’s (2002) review of the social psychology literature on small groups provides several other insights of relevance to public deliberation. On the important question of “who deliberates?”, research on juries finds that on average three members of a 12-person jury typically contribute over half the statements, while one in five jurors say little to nothing (Hastie et al. 1983, Strodbeck et al. 1957).

Jury members with higher-status jobs, greater education, and higher income talk more and are more likely to be (often incorrectly) perceived as more accurate (Hastie et al. 1983, Strodbeck et al. 1957). In what is now rather dated research, women were found to be less likely to talk on juries (James 1959, Nemeth et al. 1976, Strodbeck & Mann 1956, Strodbeck et al. 1957) and more generally to be less influential in group decisions (Ridgeway 1981). And in trials with a black defendant and a white plaintiff, “African-American jurors report less participation in deliberation, less influence over other jurors, and less satisfaction with the process” than whites (Mendelberg 2002, p. 165; see also Bowers et al. 2001). Finally, in a comprehensive review of the literature on jury decision making, Devine et al. (2001) find that the view held by the majority at the beginning of the deliberative process is likely to reflect the final verdict. This pattern is less predictable for smaller majorities, varies depending on whether the majority supports conviction or acquittal, and is affected by such factors as the structure of deliberation (e.g., the order in which charges are discussed), the frequency and procedure (e.g., secret versus public ballots) with which straw polls are taken, and the quality of counterarguments made by members of the minority viewpoint (Devine et al. 2001, pp. 690–98).

More generally, individuals who score high on the “need for cognition”—defined by Mendelberg (2002, p. 166) as “the motivation to think in depth about the essential merits of a message”—are more likely to participate in deliberative discussions and to generate valid arguments (Cacioppo 1982, Cacioppo et al. 1996, Shestowsky et al. 1998), though they are also more resistant to the views and arguments of others (Petty et al. 1995). Individuals who are perceived by others (correctly or not) as having particular expertise in the subject under discussion are more likely to be influential in the group’s decision (Bottger 1984; Kirchler & Davis 1986; Ridgeway 1981, 1987).

The use of language can also affect the negative or positive impact of deliberation. On the negative side of the ledger (Mendelberg 2002, p. 171), research on “Linguistic Intergroup Bias” (LIB) finds that

people do seem prone to call attention . . . to their own group at the expense of the other. They use LIB to imply that their group’s positive and the outgroup’s negative qualities are inherent while their group’s negative and the outgroup’s positive characteristics are accidental or temporary and caused by circumstances. The LIB tends to spike up when the group feels threatened or enters a situation of conflict with another. . . . The LIB appears to elevate both personal and group self-esteem, which suggests that people use linguistic forms and patterns to make themselves feel superior (Maass et al. 1996). The LIB may also undermine feelings of attraction and closeness that can develop during discussion, and thus may undermine affective empathy (Rubini and Kruglanski 1996).

Experimental research on “speech accommodation theory” finds that language can be used to enhance or weaken the positive impact of deliberation, depending on

circumstances. Giles et al. (1987), Hogg (1985), and Thakerar et al. (1982) demonstrate that members of lower-status groups, drawing on stereotypes of differences in speech patterns and use of language, tend to converge toward the linguistic style of higher-status groups when feelings of threat are low. This convergence increases participants' perceptions that speakers are cooperative, friendly, and effective. However, in circumstances of perceived group threat, language use diverges, reinforcing group boundaries and decreasing the likelihood of cooperation. More generally, the use of certain language (for example, using first names or plural pronouns such as "we") can "create [an] atmosphere and feeling of shared situational assessment, natural understanding, and common destiny" (Sornig 1989, p. 104; see also Dawes et al. 1990). But such feelings also can be used to build group solidarity at the expense of other groups (Mendelberg 2002, Mendelberg & Oleske 2000).

The structure or set of rules under which deliberation occurs is also important to its democratic potential. For example, Mendelberg (2002) identifies three theoretical views regarding the requirement of unanimity versus majority rule in group decision making. Dryzek (1990) argues that requiring unanimity increases the likelihood that participants will develop common understandings of others' perspectives. Manin (1987) and Davis et al. (1975) see majority rule as a more practical expectation that allows individuals and groups to reach decisions while preserving fundamental differences. To Mansbridge (1983), unanimity (or consensus) is possible without silencing minority opinions within friendship groups but is potentially problematic within groups lacking close personal ties, especially when there are significant inequalities across individuals or subgroups. The empirical research from social psychology tends to support Mansbridge's more complex view. Depending on the context, requiring unanimity can lead to a greater belief that the deliberation was fair and comprehensive (Kameda 1991, Kaplan & Miller 1987, Nemeth 1977) and to longer deliberations (Davis et al. 1997). Requiring unanimity can also encourage greater open-mindedness toward the views of others (Kameda 1991). However, the unanimity requirement can also increase the chances of deadlock (Hastie et al. 1983) and increase polarization (Kaplan & Miller 1987, Mendelberg & Karpowitz 2000). There is some evidence that majority rule can be superior to unanimity in counteracting inequities in influence among group members (Falk 1982, Falk & Falk 1981).

More generally, experimental research on jury deliberations suggests that the perception of "procedural justice" (i.e., the perception that the process by which a decision was made was fair) leads to greater support for the group decision. Thibaut & Walker (1975) find that participation in deliberations increases consideration of others' arguments and thus produces fairer outcomes. Tyler and others (Lind & Tyler 1988; Tyler 1994, 2001; Tyler & Blader 2000) have taken this argument further; they find that giving people the opportunity to voice their opinion increases their sense that the process is fair and the outcome legitimate, regardless of whether they agree substantively with the outcome.

Another presumed benefit of deliberation is that collective decisions can be superior to individual ones because more information can be brought to bear.

However, substantial research on this issue suggests that, left to their own devices, groups tend to use information that is already commonly shared, downplaying unique information held by specific individuals that could arguably improve the decision (Gigone & Hastie 1993, 1997; Larson et al. 1998; Larson et al. 1998; Stasser 1992; Stasser & Titus 1985; Stasser et al. 1989; Wittenbaum et al. 1999). Nonetheless, greater discussion can increase the use of new, less commonly shared information (Kelly & Karau 1999) and in the process improve the quality of the decisions reached by the group (Winquist & Larson 1998).

Yet another central issue concerning the democratic potential of deliberation is whether citizens have the capacity and motivation to participate effectively. Once again, experimental research from social psychology suggests that the answer is context dependent. For example, some research finds that when people feel greater accountability for their decisions, they are more likely to be objective and unbiased and to devote greater cognitive effort to reaching an accurate decision (Tetlock 1983, 1985; Tetlock & Kim 1987; Kruglanski & Freund 1983). Individuals who anticipate being part of the majority are likely to enter a deliberative situation prepared to ignore opposing views. Those who anticipate being in the minority, on the other hand, appear more likely to seek out information that supports their views, ignore prior information that contradicts their views (but actively listen to opposing views during the discussion itself), and generate more counterarguments to their own views in preparation for the discussion (Levine & Russo 1995, Zdaniuk & Levine 1996). Less is known about how emotion interacts with reason and cognition to influence the deliberative process. Research on affect suggests that it is likely to play both positive and negative roles; sometimes it leads citizens to disengage from public life, sometimes it leads them to filter new information through their (biased) emotional responses, and sometimes it enhances their likelihood of seeking out new information and engaging with others concerning substantive policy issues (Marcus et al. 2000, Taber et al. 2001, Walton 1992, Wolak et al. 2003).

Case Study– and Survey-Based Research on Political Deliberation

Research such as that discussed above provides a good deal of indirect support for the democratic potential of deliberation but also suggests that this potential is highly context dependent and rife with opportunities for going awry. Research explicitly devoted to the political consequences of deliberation, though relatively sparse, leads to a similar conclusion.

One approach to better understanding the consequences of political deliberation is observation of people as they deliberate, often combined with depth interviews of the participants. One of the best and earliest examples of this approach is Mansbridge's (1983) study of a New England town meeting and an urban crisis center. Among Mansbridge's central findings are that deliberation can (and should) take different forms depending on both the nature of the issue under discussion and the makeup of the group. "Unitary democracy," in which participants seek

to reach a consensus opinion, is most effective when participants share underlying common interests and social bonds such as friendship, and when the problem under discussion has an identifiable, “correct” solution. Under such conditions, collective decisions can be reached through open discussion in a way that (in the best of circumstances) satisfies participants both substantively and procedurally and allows for minority views to be aired and taken seriously. “Adversarial democracy,” in which decisions are made by majority rule, need be no less discursive, but is the preferred model when underlying interests are different, when participants are less closely tied together, and/or when the problem lacks a single identifiable or acceptable solution. Mansbridge is clear in pointing out that “conflict” can exist in both unitary and adversarial democracy. She also notes that people’s interests can change, and so both models of deliberation should be seen as dynamic rather than static. Important to the point of this essay, she argues that citizens’ satisfaction with deliberative participation depends heavily on choosing the correct model for the issue and groups involved:

I believe that every polity contains both common and conflicting interests and that every polity therefore needs both unitary and adversary institutions to make democratic decisions. Unitary democracies that ignore or suppress conflicting interests can do as much damage both to themselves and to their members as can adversary democracies that ignore or fail to develop their members’ common interests. . . . Indeed, the unitary model of democracy may produce more overt and angry conflict than adversary democracy, because if a political problem has an underlying correct solution, it often pays to argue things through until everyone concerned accepts this solution as correct. If there is no solution that serves everyone’s interest, more debate will not usually produce agreement, and it is often better to cut short a potentially bitter debate with a vote. (Mansbridge 1983, pp. x–xi)

Gamson (1992), using a set of focus group–like discussions about public issues, also draws several conclusions of relevance to public deliberation and civic engagement, including the observation that “ordinary” citizens are capable of meaningfully discussing topics such as affirmative action, nuclear power, international conflict, and economic retrenchment. Citizens are able to engage in such conversations by drawing on (and critiquing) such “conversational resources” as media discourse, experiential knowledge, and popular wisdom. In doing so, they can develop “collective action themes” around issues such as a sense of political agency, identity and, most powerfully, injustice, that can lead from talk to action.

Gastil (2000) provides an overview of assessments of a number of case studies of real-world deliberative initiatives. For example, a 1984 community “visioning process” in Chattanooga, Tennessee, which involved 50 community activists and volunteers meeting over a 20-week period, produced a list of priorities and solutions, including a shelter for abused women and a riverfront park. Spurred by these deliberative forums, the organizers developed a series of neighborhood associations and new nonprofit organizations, and by 1992 most of the solutions

emerging out the forums had been implemented. From 1980 to 1990, a nonprofit organization in Oregon organized hundreds of neighborhood forums across the state in which citizens discussed the state's health care problems. As a result, in 1990 the state legislature created the Health Services Commission, which adopted the same citizen forum model to provide more official guidance and input. Within a year, these forums produced a list of state-wide health care priorities which were used to guide government action in this area.

Qualitative research on the Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forums suggests that

participation in deliberative forums can (1) change participants' political opinions, (2) increase participants' political self-efficacy and their sense of community identity, (3) widen and diversify participants' political communication networks, (4) make participants more "deliberative" in their political conversations, (5) raise participants' interest in politics, and (6) increase the frequency of participants' political information seeking and political activity. (Gastil 2000, pp. 118–19; see also Gastil 1994, Loyacano 1992)

These and several other case studies of community-based deliberative forums (often initiated by local nonprofit organizations, media outlets, and governments) suggest that "deliberation both developed coherent collective interests and built strong bonds among the citizens who pursued those interests together" (Gastil 2000, p. 120; see also Briand 1999, Sirianni & Friedland 2001, Gill 1996, Lappe & Dubois 1994, Pearce & Littlejohn 1997, Podziba 1998). In an excellent study on informal conversation (rather than formal deliberation) among a group of retired, middle-class whites who meet regularly at a local coffee shop, Walsh (2003a) reaches a more mixed, context-dependent conclusion about the civic benefits of public talk. On the one hand, her work reveals how conversations about politics, coupled with the bonds of identity and friendship, work together to create stronger community and social ties. But she also finds that informal political discussion can have less salutary effects by reinforcing group-based social boundaries and encouraging exclusionary and at times undemocratic understandings of the political world.

More quantitative analyses of the impact of real-world deliberative forums also provide encouraging, if inconclusive and sometimes mixed, evidence that they can produce positive impacts on participants. Delli Carpini (1997) reports that citizens who participated in a series of deliberative discussions about the role of money in politics became more knowledgeable about the issue, more trusting of their fellow participants, and more likely to report participating in other forms of civic engagement. They also overwhelmingly agreed that the recommendations summarized in the project's final report accurately reflected the consensus of the group, even when these recommendations did not reflect their own personal view.

Research by Gastil et al. (2002) finds that citizens who participated in jury deliberations were subsequently more likely to vote in elections. Small-group

participants in Wuthnow's (1994) survey reported that, as a result of their participation, they worked with the group to help others in the group (74%) and outside the group (62%), donated money to a charitable organization (57%), became more interested in social justice or peace issues (56%), became more interested in political or social issues (45%), volunteered in their community (43%), changed their mind about a political or social issue (40%), and participated in a political rally or worked for a political campaign (12%). Prepost studies of several National Issues Forums find increases in participants' knowledge of the issues under discussion, a greater willingness to compromise, more sophisticated and internally consistent opinions, and movement toward more moderate policy choices (Doble & Richardson 1991; Gastil & Dillard 1999a,b).¹ A study using a quasi-experimental, pretest/post-test comparison group design (Cook & Jacobs 1998) finds that participants in a deliberative forum entitled *Americans Discuss Social Security* increased their levels of interest in Social Security, knowledge about the program, and plans for political involvement on the issue (though not their actual participation) as compared to a random sample of community residents and nonattending forum invitees.

Not all studies of real-world initiatives are universally positive in their conclusions regarding the democratic benefits of public deliberation. For example, Mendelberg & Oleske (2000) find that participation in a meeting on school desegregation led to intense dissatisfaction among participants, paralleling Mansbridge's (1983) finding of frustration and anger among those attending a New England town meeting (see also Karpowitz 2003). An effort to increase citizen involvement in policy decisions in five cities failed to increase participation rates (Berry et al. 1993). Tyler (1994) and Tyler & Mitchell (1994) find that citizens who believe they have the ability to make arguments to Congress or influence its decisions are less likely to hold favorable attitudes toward that institution. Walsh (2003b, p. 26), in a prepost test of participants in two Study Circles programs that addressed issues of race in their communities, concludes:

The benefits of participating in civic dialogue are far from obvious. . . . Although the format of the programs has the potential to increase internal and external efficacy, enlarge social identities and lead perceptions of community to be more inclusive, the data are not decisive in these respects. There are signs that exposure to the program has a positive effect on perceptions of responsiveness of local government, but possibly a negative effect on individuals' sense of ability to affect policy, due in part to increasing perceptions that race relations is a complex issue. Analysis of feelings of closeness to various social groups suggests that participating may have a positive effect in this respect, but not universally. For some respondents, there are signs of heightened intergroup conflict.

¹See also Lindeman (2002, pp. 211–16) on public deliberation regarding health care reform and environmental regulation and Barabas (2000) on deliberations about social security.

Lindeman (2002) finds evidence that, when given the opportunity to deliberate, citizens showed strong support for health care reform and environmental regulation—but that the federal government failed to act on these issues in ways consonant with public opinion.

Although these findings do not directly challenge the individual or collective efficacy of deliberation, they do suggest that its impact is complex and context dependent and does not assure either citizen satisfaction or government responsiveness.

Experimental Research on Political Deliberation

Experimental research explicitly devoted to political deliberation paints an equally if not more complex picture. In a controlled experiment in which partisan groups were asked to deliberate about ways to reduce the federal budget deficit and specify which programs to cut and which taxes to raise, Gaertner et al. (1999) found that greater interaction across groups reduced bias and increased consensual decision making. However, these results were as likely to occur through a simple exchange of information about each group's fixed preferences as through open discussion.

Stasser & Titus (1985) tested the hypothesis that collective political decisions are superior to individual ones by providing groups of four individuals with information about three fictitious candidates for public office and then asking them to discuss the candidates before choosing whom to vote for. In one condition, all participants received the same information clearly showing candidate A to be the most qualified. In the second condition, the same information about candidate A was available in toto but was equally divided among participants, so that no one individual had enough information to see that A was the superior candidate. Groups in which each participant began with full information overwhelmingly voted in favor of candidate A, with support increasing from 66% prior to discussion to 85% afterward. In contrast, only a quarter of individuals who began with partial information supported candidate A prior to their discussions. Most significantly, and contrary to the expectations of deliberative theorists, discussing the candidates did not result in aggregating information across participants, and support for candidate A actually dropped slightly.

In a test of the impact of procedural justice on perceptions of legitimacy, Gangl (2000) provided subjects with different descriptions of "fair" legislative processes (including one that emphasized opportunities for the public to voice their opinions) and of "unfair" processes. She finds that whereas the "neutral and balanced" and the "nonself-serving decision maker" processes both increased perceptions of legitimacy of the system, the "people have voice" process produced statistically insignificant declines in perceived legitimacy. And Morrell (1999) finds that the individuals assigned to a high-participation condition in a political decision-making experiment were at best no more likely than those in the low-participation condition to be satisfied with the process or to feel it was legitimate; in some cases, they felt it was less legitimate and were less satisfied. Morrell (1999, p. 318)

concludes that participatory processes “can create an atmosphere of disconnection and dislike. . . . Rather than bringing citizens together, these types of structures of participation can only exacerbate already present divisions.”

Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002b) conducted a series of four experiments intended to test the impact of different deliberative decision-making processes on perceived legitimacy of the decision and satisfaction and compliance with it. In each of the four experimental conditions, \$20 was to be divided between the subject and another participant (usually a confederate). The decision-making conditions varied by whether the subject was given the opportunity to voice reasons for receiving the money and/or to elect the decision maker. They also varied by whether the decision maker appeared to be responsive to the subject’s argument. In all conditions, the subject ultimately was given only \$3 of the \$20 available. In a creative twist designed to test compliance, when the subject went to receive his or her money, the clerk “mistakenly” offered him or her \$4 more than was actually awarded.

The logic of the experiments is clear. They provide opportunities for citizen “voice” under different conditions of procedural fairness, holding substantive outcome constant but unfair. Three dependent variables were used: a seven-point scale measuring perceived fairness of the decision maker; a seven-point scale measuring satisfaction with the outcome; and a behavioral compliance measure reflecting whether the subject corrected the mistaken award of four extra dollars. Although results were not always statistically significant (due in part to small *n* and in part to substantively small differences), the patterns were clear. Voice alone made no difference in subjects’ perceptions of fairness of the decision maker, satisfaction with the outcome, or (for the most part) compliance with the decision. Having the opportunity to vote for the decision maker did seem to increase the positive impact of voice on perceptions of decision-maker fairness. And, most tellingly, when subjects had “evidence” of the impact of their voice on the decision (i.e., when the decision maker increased the amount awarded after hearing the subject’s reasons for receiving it), voice had a positive effect on perceptions of decision-maker fairness, fairness of the outcome, and compliance.

The Hibbing & Theiss-Morse experiments do not fully capture the notion of public deliberation; for example, the interactions occurred only between subjects and decision makers rather than across subjects, and subjects did not even hear the arguments of other subjects or confederates. Nonetheless, these experiments add to the evidence that the positive impact of discursive participation is strongly context dependent and tied to both process and outcomes. The findings also suggest that in the absence of real influence, the illusion of voice can lead to even greater frustration and disenchantment than having no voice at all—a conclusion that even the most die-hard deliberative theorist would agree with.

More consistently supportive findings for the positive impact of deliberation emerge from research surrounding the “deliberative poll” model developed by Fishkin (1995). Deliberative polls combine aspects of the internal validity provided by experimental design, the external validity provided by actual deliberation about

real-world issues, and the generalizability provided by surveys. For example, in national deliberative polls, a close approximation of a national random sample is recruited via telephone survey to attend a two- to four-day forum in which they participate in facilitated small group discussions about public issues such as crime, world affairs, or pending referenda or elections. Using both qualitative observation and quantitative prepost tests, researchers test the impact of public deliberation on participants' attitudes and opinions. Thus, a deliberative poll is

both a social scientific quasi-experiment and a form of public consultation. As an experimental manipulation, the treatment consists of exposure to detailed briefing documents, participation in subsequent small group discussions, and the ability to question competing experts and policymakers. The goal is to create a counterfactual public opinion resting on a good deal of information and serious consideration of competing perspectives. Democratic theory assumes that public opinion is so grounded, but empirical research has made it abundantly clear that the "state of nature" (respondents as they are typically found in their day to day environment) bears little resemblance to this democratic ideal. . . . As an exercise in social science, therefore, Deliberative Polling seeks to create the conditions that facilitate the expression of informed and thoughtful opinion. . . . As a form of public consultation, Deliberative Polls provide policymakers with a representation of collective, more informed opinion. (Iyengar et al. 2003, pp. 1–2)

Research on the impact of deliberative polls (Fishkin 1999; Fishkin & Luskin 1999a,b,c; Luskin & Fishkin 1998; Luskin et al. 1999a,b, 2000, 2002) provides evidence that participation in such forums facilitates political learning (as measured by prepost tests of factual knowledge), promotes interpretable individual and collective opinion change on the policy issues discussed (indicating that informed opinion differs from the more "top of the head" responses tapped by opinion surveys), and increases political efficacy (and thus potentially and indirectly strengthens other aspects of citizenship that are positively related to efficacy, such as political interest and civic and political participation). More qualitative observations of the deliberative poll experience (e.g., McCombs & Reynolds 1999) provide additional if less systematic evidence regarding its positive impact on participants' sense of connectedness to fellow citizens, respect for views different from their own, social bonding, and the like.

The Potential of Online Deliberation

Not all responses to the deliberative poll have been positive (see, e.g., Traugott 1992). There have been concerns about the true generalizability of findings given possible, not easily measured biases (who agrees to attend the forum?) and potential idiosyncrasies in the deliberative experience. Also challenged are the durability of changes in attitudes, opinions, and knowledge, and the practicality of the design as a means of increasing meaningful deliberation among the larger population. One

possible solution to this last issue is the internet. As Iyengar et al. (2003, pp. 2–3) note,

Obviously, assembling a national random sample at a central location for some extended period of time (usually a weekend) is both cost and labor intensive. Participants must be provided free transportation, hotel accommodations, meals, as well as significant honorari[a] for undertaking the experiment. Moreover, participation in the poll imposes real opportunity costs in the form of disruption to participants' personal and family schedules. . . . The rapid development of information technology has made it possible to replicate Deliberative Polling online.

In addition to significantly lower costs for organizers and participants, online deliberation enables more long-term deliberation, flexibility in when individuals participate, more timely deliberation on emerging issues, and, perhaps most significantly, the possibility of a much larger scale. But can online deliberation capture the experience and benefits of the face-to-face ideal? To address this question, Iyengar et al. (2003) recently conducted online and face-to-face versions of a deliberative poll devoted to foreign policy issues. Initial analysis of the findings suggests that online deliberation

is a viable process with significant potential for improving practices of public consultation and for illuminating our understanding of the role of deliberation in opinion formation. . . . Already we can see that the online process produced changes that roughly paralleled those from the face-to-face experiment—participants became more informed and underwent significant changes in opinion in a generally more internationalist direction (in comparison to their respective control groups). (Iyengar et al. 2003, p. 18)

More extensive research on online deliberation conducted by Cappella, Price, and colleagues provides more detailed and equally encouraging findings (Cappella et al. 2002; Price & Cappella 2002; Price et al. 2002, 2003). Based on a carefully designed series of monthly facilitated online deliberations run throughout the 2000 election cycle, which involved randomly recruited and assigned participants as well as control groups, their research has found that participation in online discussions can produce greater awareness of the reasons behind opposing views, but can also produce polarization (in the case of opinions regarding the Supreme Court). In deliberations concerning the aftermath of the 2000 presidential-election debacle, these authors observed convergence of opinions regarding the presidency and increases in confidence in political institutions (specifically Congress). Also noted were framing effects (in the case of discussions about gay civil unions); opinion change among undecided participants in the direction of dominant group arguments (on the issue of tax policy); increases in generalized social trust; and increases in a variety of forms of participation, including community engagement and voting.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Although empirical research that directly tests the civic and political implications of discursive participation and public deliberation remains relatively thin, a number of tentative conclusions can be drawn from existing research as well as from the larger body of research available from the social psychology literature. First, despite some arguments and evidence that citizens have little interest in discussing public issues, enough Americans engage in public talk—including in formats that approximate theorists' definition of public deliberation—to warrant a deeper understanding of its role in democratic politics. Second, research drawn from social psychology, though not directly exploring the role of deliberation in democratic politics, provides substantial (if partial and inconsistent) evidence that deliberation can lead to some of the individual and collective benefits postulated by democratic theorists. Third, similar findings emerge from research (case studies, surveys, laboratory experiments, and quasi-experimental designs) explicitly designed to test the democratic, political uses of deliberation. Fourth, there is evidence that the internet may prove a useful tool in increasing the opportunities both for studying deliberation and for increasing its use by and utility for citizens. Fifth and most important, the impact of deliberation and other forms of discursive politics is highly context dependent. It varies with the purpose of the deliberation, the subject under discussion, who participates, the connection to authoritative decision makers, the rules governing interactions, the information provided, prior beliefs, substantive outcomes, and real-world conditions. As a result, although the research summarized in this essay demonstrates numerous positive benefits of deliberation, it also suggests that deliberation, under less optimal circumstances, can be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst.

Better understanding how these and other contextual factors—both independently and in interaction with each other—affect the positive and negative consequences of public deliberation should be one of the primary goals of future research. Scholars should make a more concerted effort to tie their research explicitly to the specific hypotheses generated by deliberative theorists. We should also draw more heavily on relevant research generated by other disciplines, such as social psychology. We should combine multiple methods to build on the strengths of qualitative case studies, participant observation, survey research, and laboratory and field-based research. And we should take greater advantage of the myriad real-world deliberative experiments that occur every day.

A number of questions seem ripe for more definitive answers. For example, what motivates people to engage in discursive participation and public deliberation? What is the deliberative experience that millions of Americans currently engage in actually like? How do such factors as socioeconomic status, gender, race, and education affect the decision to deliberate, the discursive experience itself, and the individual and collective impact of that experience? What other "rules" besides those discussed above impact the deliberative experience and its outcomes? How lasting are the effects of deliberation? How is deliberation (as both

cause and effect) connected to other attitudinal and especially behavioral aspects of “good” citizenship? What models of deliberation, under what circumstances, are likely to be the most effective? Existing research hints at answers to these and other important questions. But as Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (2002b, p. 30) note, “Prescriptions about how to improve democratic government are too important to leave to the realm of wishful thinking.” They are also too important to leave to suggestive and promising, but to date still inconclusive, research.

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Several public opinion phenomena also call out for greater study. One is the well-established black/white policy preference gap, which has been noted by many scholars but, regrettably, examined by few. All too often, researchers have focused on either blacks or whites, rather than generating hypotheses that would explain the views of both groups. In the area of racial attitudes, one explanation may not fully account for how these views affect policy preferences. Still, more work is needed to isolate the precise political circumstances that trigger one set of explanations (e.g., the politics-centered model or the new racism models) rather than another (e.g., the group interest models). Addressing this concern will likely require a multi-methodological approach wherein researchers rely on traditional survey instruments, content analyses, and laboratory and field experiments. Although a number of researchers have begun to experiment on the impact of racial attitudes on policy and candidate preferences, the type of racial message (e.g., stereotype-relevant versus group conflict-oriented) has been understudied.

Perhaps the greatest flaw in the literatures we have reviewed is their relative isolation from one another. Research that falls under the description of “race and politics” (the study of whites’ racial attitudes, much of the racial priming literature, the debate about the importance of racial context) and research more typically characterized as “black politics” (the study of blacks’ racial attitudes and much of the race and representation literature) often all but ignore each other. In some cases this may be understandable, but we believe these separate lines of research impoverish the discipline in its quest for valid theories that can be generalized across populations. The study of race and politics should not exclude black voices systematically, and the study of race and representation should not ignore the insights of the racial attitudes literature. We hope that current and future generations of scholars will make every effort to bridge this divide, which is correlated all too often with the race of the researcher (see Dawson & Wilson 1991).

Our examination of research on race and politics has implications beyond the scholarly literature. We have reviewed a wide range of studies that try to answer a fundamental question: What role does race play in contemporary American politics? Conclusions have been tentative in some cases, and complex in others, but overall we have found that, even 50 years after the *Brown* decision, race remains a fundamental component of the American political system. Racial divisions, racial resentments, and group loyalties influence the form and content of the political party system, the nature and distribution of public opinion, and the behavior of political elites in and out of office. In 1903, Dubois (1969 [1903]) warned that the “problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line.” In many areas of politics, his statement is as true today as it was 100 years ago.

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MODELS OF VETOES AND VETO BARGAINING

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■ **Abstract** Models of veto bargaining have become an important tool for formal institutional analysis. This chapter reviews the core model of veto bargaining and some of its more interesting and useful extensions, focusing on one of the best developed applications, the presidential veto over legislation. One of the primary attractions of these models is that they often produce crisp, testable empirical predictions. Our review focuses on 18 such predictions. We conclude with a brief review of the empirical evidence related to these hypotheses.

1. INTRODUCTION

Consider the following situations:

- A legislature passes a bill and sends it to the executive, who may veto the bill.
- A legislature passes a bill and a constitutional court reviews it, possibly striking it down as unconstitutional.
- A legislative committee brings a bill to the floor of the legislature under a closed rule (no amendments allowed).
- An executive presents a legislative body with a treaty, which it may reject or accept but not modify.
- An executive promulgates an executive order, which the legislature may tacitly accept or explicitly reject.
- An executive or a board presents voters (or a legislature) with a proposed budget, which they may accept or reject.
- An interest group places an initiative on the ballot for a decision by the voters.
- An executive agency writes a regulation, which an administrative law court may review and strike down as incompatible with the agency's statutory authority or direction.

- A subordinate presents a bureaucratic superior with an alternative to current policy, which the superior may accept or reject.

All these examples and many more involve veto bargaining, one of the most ubiquitous of all forms of political bargaining.

A defining feature of veto bargaining is that a proposer makes a take-it-or-leave-it offer to a receiver. But often this simple procedure is embedded in more complex procedures that reflect different institutional structures. For example, rejections of offers (vetoes) may themselves be overridden. The proposer may follow a rejected offer with a subsequent offer. The receiver may issue a veto threat before the proposer makes her offer. Third parties may monitor the bargaining and reward or punish the bargainers. Behavior in one episode of bargaining may offer hints about likely behavior in subsequent episodes that involve somewhat different issues. And so on. In order to study the implications of any of these situations, a political analyst can modify and extend the simple models of veto bargaining to capture the critical strategic features in question. This flexibility has made models of veto bargaining an essential component in the toolkit of rational choice institutionalists.

In addition, models of veto bargaining often yield crisp empirical predictions, for example, about the circumstances under which rejections are likely or unlikely, the character (e.g., ideological make-up) of offers as reversion points shift, and so on. Many of these comparative static predictions have received systematic empirical support across a variety of institutional settings (briefly reviewed below). Thus, models of veto bargaining have also been at the forefront of work on the empirical implications of formal, game theoretic models of politics.

In this chapter, we review the core model of veto bargaining and some of its most interesting and useful extensions. Although the substantive applications of veto bargaining are numerous, we focus on one of the more developed applications, the presidential veto over legislation. Throughout, we keep technical considerations to a minimum, expositing the models by using very simple set-ups. More complex modifications—some hitherto restricted to advanced research articles—then develop naturally from the simpler ones. All employ a common framework and notation, which is listed in Table 1. Students who have received as little as a single semester of instruction in game theory ought to be able to follow most of the exposition, and advanced researchers who have been curious about the new developments should be able to see the essential ideas quickly and easily.

The chapter is organized as follows. In Sections 2 and 3, we present the basic model of veto bargaining derived from the seminal work of Romer & Rosenthal (1978) and present the results derived from the complete-information version of that model. Noting the inability of the complete-information model to produce vetoes, we explore a simple incomplete-information model in Section 4. This model indicates that uncertainty about the president's position can produce vetoes if legislative and presidential preferences are sufficiently divergent. In Section 5, we proceed to application of the incomplete-information model focusing on veto threats, sequential bargaining, presidential reputations, and the role of electoral politics. In Section 6, we conclude with a brief discussion of empirical research and current research opportunities.

TABLE 1 Notation used in this review

Variable	Definition
x	Policy outcome
q	Status quo
C	Congress
P	President
O	Override pivotal voter
V	Voter
c	Congress's ideal point
p	President's ideal point (complete information)
o	Override pivot's ideal point
m	Moderate presidential type
e	Extreme presidential type
r	Recalcitrant presidential type
a	Accommodating presidential type
v	Voter's ideal point
b	Legislative proposal
π	Probability that president is extreme type
ρ	Probability bargaining breaks down following a veto
$u(x; c)$	Congress's utility function
$v(x; p)$	President's utility function
$u_o(x; o)$	Override pivot's utility function
$w(e, m, \pi; v)$	Voter's utility function

2. PRELIMINARIES

To keep the models relatively simple, we abstract from bicameralism and other features of the internal institutional process to model the proposer—typically a legislature, such as the U.S. Congress—as a unitary actor whom we denote as C (“Congress”).¹ Similarly, we treat the receiver—typically an executive, such as the U.S. president—as a unitary actor whom we denote as P (“President”). These assumptions allow us to model veto bargaining as bilateral between the proposer and the receiver. For ease of exposition, we often refer to the proposer as “Congress” or “she,” and the receiver as the “president” or “he.”

All the models presented in this chapter focus on political bargaining over a one-dimensional policy space. The assumption of unidimensionality is not particularly

¹We prefer to think of C as the median member of the chamber. Adherents of other theories of legislative decision making can interpret C according to their preferred conception (party leader, majority party median, etc.). Such ecclesiastical disputes need not detain us here.

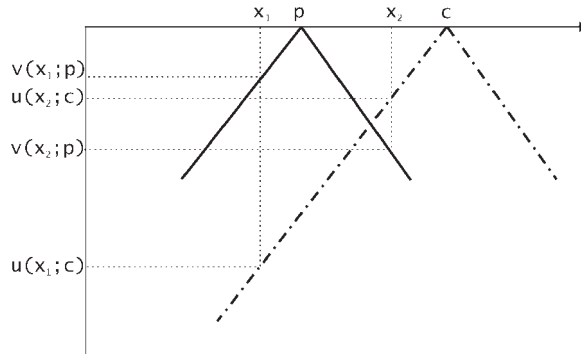


Figure 1 Linear spatial preferences.

consequential except in the more advanced models that incorporate signaling. Most of the predictions in the simpler models would hold for a multidimensional model, so long as the players are treated as unitary actors.

For simplicity of exposition, we assume C and P evaluate policy alternatives solely on their proximity to their most preferred policies, which we denote c and p , respectively. Thus, the policy utility functions for C and P are $u(x; c) = -|x - c|$ and $v(x; p) = -|x - p|$ given any alternative x . These functions are plotted in Figure 1.

In some of the models discussed in this chapter, an additional player is relevant for determining whether the president's veto will be overridden. The override pivot, denoted O , has an ideal point o . This pivot is defined as the legislator closest to the president for whom exactly one third of the legislature has ideal points either lower or higher than hers.² We assume O 's utility function has the same form as C and P , or $u_o(x; o)$. For clarity of exposition, we refer to the override pivot as "it."

3. THE BASIC MODEL: COMPLETE INFORMATION

In the core model, the sequence of play is as follows:

1. C makes a proposal b (a "bill") to change the status quo or reversion policy q .
2. P accepts or vetoes the offer. If P accepts the offer, the final policy outcome x is the bill b , and the game ends.
3. If P vetoes the offer, a vote on a motion to override occurs. If O supports the motion, the bill is successful and again $x = b$ is the new policy. If O does not support the motion, the bill fails and $x = q$, so the status quo remains the policy in effect.

²If the president has a low ideal point, O is the thirty-third-percentile legislator. Alternatively, if the president has a relatively high ideal point, O is the sixty-seventh-percentile legislator.

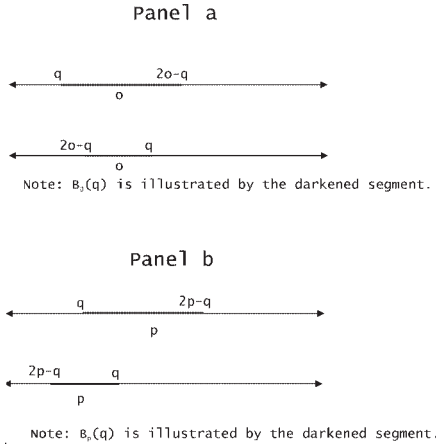


Figure 2 Outcomes of complete-information model.

A typical point of departure for analyzing veto power is the assumption that all actors are perfectly informed about the preferences and actions of all other players. Under these assumptions, there is no uncertainty about how the receiver or override pivots will respond to a proposal. Therefore, C can choose b optimally given her correct expectations about the future.

Given that there is no uncertainty, the game can be solved via backward induction. First consider the decision of the override pivots on an override motion. Clearly, a pivot will vote to override if it prefers b to q . Thus, we can define a set of bills $B_o(q)$, shown in Figure 2a, that O prefers to q so that an override motion would always be successful if b is an element of this set. Given the assumptions about the symmetry of the utility functions, this set is simply $[q, 2o - q]$ or $[2o - q, q]$ depending on whether or not $o > q$. As long as C makes a proposal in $B_o(q)$, the veto will be overridden and the proposal will become the new policy.

Having determined which proposals survive a veto, we can now compute which proposals will be accepted by the receiver. First, it is reasonable to assume that the president will accept any bill that would have been overridden.³ Thus, the bills in $B_o(q)$ will not be vetoed. Nor will the president veto any bills that he prefers to the status quo. Formally, let $B_p(q)$ be the set of bills for which $v(b; p) \geq v(q; p)$, that is, $-|b - p| \geq -|q - p|$. Under the specified assumptions, $B_p(q)$ is given by either $[q, 2p - q]$ or $[2p - q, q]$ depending on whether or not $p > q$ (Figure 2b).

Since C is perfectly informed about P 's preferences, she knows for certain that any bill in either $B_o(q)$ or $B_p(q)$ will be successful. She need only offer her most-preferred bill from these sets. If q is her favorite bill in these sets, she shouldn't

³Rationales for this assumption range from the practical to the very technical. The easiest is that with any cost of being overridden, no matter how small, the president would prefer to sign any bill destined to pass over his veto.

legislate at all; any cost of legislating, no matter how small, will lead her to prefer not to pass a bill destined to be vetoed. Thus, it is straightforward to compute C 's optimal behavior.

In the Appendix of this chapter, we formally present Proposition 1, which fully describes the proposal, veto, and override behavior in the subgame perfect Nash equilibrium to the basic veto game. This proposition generates three specific predictions that are useful in understanding the power of the veto.

The first prediction deals with the usage of the veto. In the basic model, the president never vetoes any bill whose veto can be overridden, and the legislature never makes any proposal that will be vetoed, so the only bills we observe in equilibrium are passed bills.

Prediction 1 (complete information: veto frequency). If all actors are perfectly informed about the preferences of all other actors, vetoes should not occur.

Though seemingly simple (or even absurd), Prediction 1 has a very powerful implication. Most importantly, it demonstrates that it is impossible to infer anything about the extent of veto power from the frequency of vetoes. In this very simple model, P 's veto power moves policy away from that preferred by C —yet we never see vetoes actually employed. Thus, it would be incorrect to infer that the veto is impotent based solely on the infrequency of its use.

The second prediction, which we present graphically, is that the executive veto has policy consequences even if it not used. Figures 3 and 4 present the equilibrium policy outcomes x^* for all status quo points and for two illustrative preference configurations. These policy outcomes with the veto can be compared with the policy outcome that would prevail without an executive veto, namely, $x^* = c$. Note that for status quo points around p and o , the veto moves policy away from c toward the positions favored by P and O .

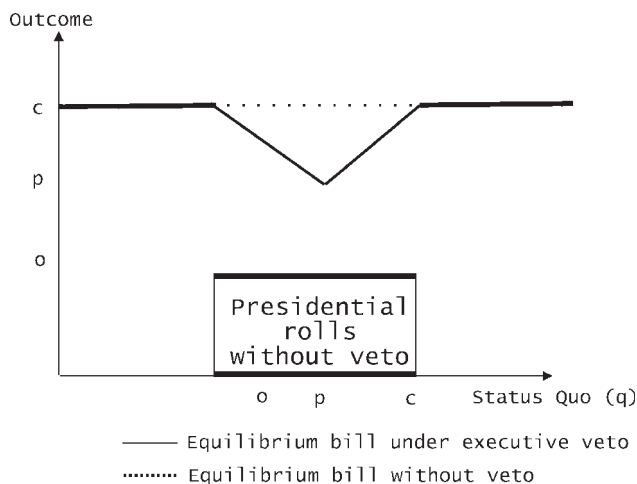


Figure 3 Equilibrium proposals when $c > p > o$.

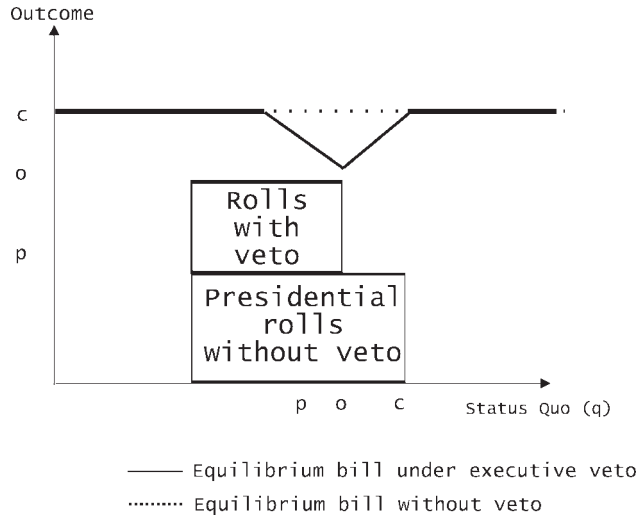


Figure 4 Equilibrium proposals when $c > o > p$.

Prediction 2 (complete information: policy outcomes). Policy may be responsive to the preferences of the receiver or the override pivot.

In the case of executive-legislative relations in separation-of-powers systems, Proposition 1 also leads to some important predictions about presidential support for legislation. Suppose for the moment that the president does not have veto power. Then policy is determined solely by Congress’s preferences, and often legislation passes that the president opposes. In other words, he would veto these bills if he could. Of course, whether the president will get “rolled” in this way depends on the position of the status quo. Figure 3 indicates the set of status quos in which policy will move contrary to the president’s preferences. Now suppose instead the president can utilize the veto. Not surprisingly, the circumstances under which he gets rolled are much rarer. In fact, if the president’s ideal point lies between c and o (as in Figure 3), he never gets rolled. If the president’s preferences are more extreme than the override pivot’s (as in Figure 4), he may get rolled when veto-proof legislation is passed. Critically, however, rolls will occur far less often when the president possesses the veto power than when he lacks it.

Prediction 3 (complete information: roll rates). The probability of passage of offers opposed by the president is lower when he has a veto.⁴

⁴By stating the prediction in terms of the probability that the president will be rolled rather than the set of status quos under which a roll occurs, we are implicitly assuming that the distribution of status quo points does not vary across the models. As Krehbiel (1998) points out, this assumption can be problematic because different models of collective choice predict different dynamic evolution of status quos.

This is an obvious prediction, but it can be useful when considering the history of the veto in different institutional structures. For example, some have argued that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a norm of legislative deference prevented the U.S. president from using the veto except to protect the Constitution (see McCarty 2002). If this is true, we should observe higher presidential roll rates prior to the breakdown of this norm than afterward. We would also expect to see roll rates responding to variations in the override pivot only after the establishment of the veto as policy tool. Thus, this simple prediction can provide leverage in understanding institutional history.

3.1. Extension: Sequential Veto Bargaining Under Complete Information

In many cases, the proposer can make repeated offers if the receiver uses the veto, and the receiver can veto and reveto offers. Cameron (2000) calls such situations “sequential veto bargaining.” Maintaining the assumption of complete and perfect information, what happens to the proposer C ’s offers under sequential veto bargaining? One might expect that the receiver can implicitly threaten to veto early offers and extract concessions from the proposer. However, Primo (2002) finds that the proposer makes exactly the same offers in finitely and infinitely repeated versions of the basic model—and this holds for (almost) any discount rates for the proposer and receiver.

We merely sketch Primo’s results. First, assume both players receive $x_t = q$ in period t if P vetoes the bill or C makes no offer. However, if a bill is ever accepted, then both players receive $x_t = b_t$ for that and all succeeding periods in the game (which may be infinite in length). Hence, the payoff function for C becomes $\sum_{t=1}^T \delta_C^{t-1} u(x_t)$, and similarly for P $\sum_{t=1}^T \delta_P^{t-1} v(x_t)$, where $\delta_C \in (0, 1]$ is the discount factor for C and δ_P that for P . (We abstract for the moment from veto overrides).

First, Primo (2002) proves the following result: For any game with total number of finite periods T , for any allowable discount factors, the equilibrium offers, vetoes, acceptances, and policy outcomes specified in Proposition 1 remain the unique subgame perfect equilibrium. The intuition for the result is that if the game reaches the last period, the outcome will be identical to that of Proposition 1. Consider first the case of Proposition 1 where the president is indifferent to accepting or rejecting the equilibrium proposal, so that $-|p - q| = -|b_T - q|$. Thus, his payoff in the last period is $-|p - q|$. Backing up one more period, his utility of vetoing is therefore $-|p - q| - \delta_P |p - q| = -(1 + \delta_P)|p - q|$ and the utility of accepting any b_{T-1} is $-(1 + \delta_P)|p - b_{T-1}|$. Because the $(1 + \delta_P)$ simply scales up both utilities, the president’s calculus is the same as it is in the final period. Thus, $b_{T-1} = b_T = b^*$. This logic will continue for any finite number of periods. The case where $b^* = c$ is very similar.

Next, Primo extends his result to the infinitely repeated case. Again, the same offers, vetoes, acceptances, and policy outcomes are the unique subgame perfect

equilibrium for all discount rates in $(0,1)$.⁵ This result may seem surprising to those familiar with the many Folk Theorems for repeated games, which typically generate a plethora of equilibria. However, as Primo (2002, p. 419) notes,

We should not expect a Folk theorem to be operative. Intuitively, Folk theorem results emerge when there are credible punishment or reward strategies that can be invoked. This is not possible in this game, because each player (implicitly) has veto authority over the policy outcome, either by not proposing a particular policy, in the case of the proposer, or by rejecting a proposal, in the case of the receiver.

Absent these punishment strategies, only the unique equilibrium from Proposition 1 can exist.

What happens if we add veto overrides to this game? Cameron (2000) considers a two-period model that is almost identical to Primo's except that a veto override player is randomly selected in each period (Cameron 2000, pp. 99–106, 117–20).⁶ Again, the one-shot offers, acceptances, and vetoes remain the unique equilibrium. This result surely extends to any finite number of periods, and Primo's results strongly suggest the same for infinitely repeated offers with vetoes. This leads us to Prediction 4.

Prediction 4 (complete information: sequential veto bargaining). In complete-information settings, sequential veto bargaining yields the same behavior and outcomes as one-shot veto bargaining. This holds for any period game, even if one player is more patient than the other.

An important implication of Prediction 4 for modelers is that the results from one-shot versions of veto bargaining will be robust to repetition—unless incomplete information is a critical feature of the environment. Primo (2002) suggests a number of empirical implications; for example, term limits may not affect presidential veto power very significantly, since the time horizon of the executive does not affect the equilibrium outcome.

4. SIMPLE INCOMPLETE INFORMATION

The complete-information model provides an excellent tool for studying veto power, but it cannot provide a basis for studying vetoes themselves, for the obvious reason that it predicts vetoes will not occur. We now turn to a simple model for studying vetoes. In this model, vetoes do occur. This simple incomplete-information model provides the foundation for building more complex models of veto bargaining that incorporate reputation, learning, and dynamics.

⁵If $\delta_p = 1$, so that the president is infinitely patient, there may be additional equilibria. But this is simply a technical curiosity (see Primo 2002, Proposition 4).

⁶Technically, this is a game with incomplete information. In addition, Cameron assumes an exogenous probability that bargaining breaks down in each period, rather than discount factors. The latter is a very minor difference from the game considered above.

In order to explain the fact that vetoes occur, one must dispense with at least one of the assumptions underlying the basic model. Although the model presented in Section 3 has some very restrictive assumptions, few of them are actually consequential in the prediction of no vetoes. One important exception is the assumption that C has complete information about the preferences of P and O . When C has incomplete information, vetoes may occur because the legislature overestimates its ability to extract concessions from the president or the override pivot.

Relaxing the assumption of complete information has been the starting point for most of the recent work on veto bargaining (Cameron 2000, Matthews 1989, McCarty 1997). To present the flavor of these models, we consider a model without an override possibility, so that q remains the policy in the event of a veto. To capture the uncertainty that the proposer C faces about the receiver P 's preferences, we assume she believes P is one of two preference types: a moderate with ideal point m or an extremist with ideal point e . We assume throughout that $e < m < c$. Following the usual practice in applied game theory, we assume C 's beliefs are common knowledge (P knows these beliefs, C knows that P knows, etc.). Let π be the probability that P is the extreme type.

The main implication of the uncertainty about preferences is that Congress no longer knows for sure which bills the president will accept and which he will veto. To see this, consider Figure 5, where we assume that $q < e$. Here the set of bills the extremist type of receiver is willing to accept over the status quo is only a subset of those the moderate type is willing to accept. Thus, the proposer can force a more attractive bill (from her perspective) on the moderate receiver than she can on the extremist one. C 's dilemma is whether to propose a bill she finds relatively less attractive but that both types will accept—a bill like b_e —or be more aggressive and propose a bill like b_m , which she finds more attractive but only the moderate receiver will accept. Clearly, the attractiveness of the gamble depends on C 's beliefs about P 's type. If π is high (so C believes P is probably an extremist), C will likely be deterred from making the aggressive proposal. On the other hand, if π is low (so C believes P is probably a moderate), C may well find b_m an attractive gamble. If she offers it, it will sometimes prove a poor choice: The receiver will turn out to be the extreme type and will veto it.

In the Appendix to this chapter, we calculate the necessary conditions for a veto to occur. For the preference configuration in Figure 5a, we show that C will make the risky proposal (possibly generating a veto) if and only if

$$\pi < \frac{m - e}{m - q} \quad 1.$$

However, the necessary conditions change as c moves closer to m , as in Figure 5b. Here C 's best risky proposal is her ideal point c . This fact alters the necessary condition somewhat:

$$\pi < \frac{c + q - 2e}{c - q} \quad 2.$$

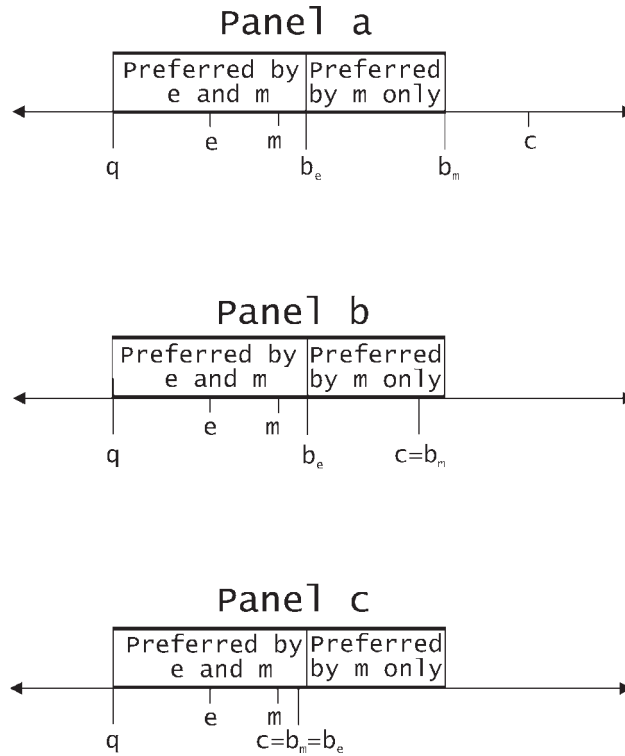


Figure 5 Outcomes of incomplete-information model.

It can easily be shown that the right-hand side of Equation 2 is lower than that of Equation 1, implying that a veto is less likely to occur. This is because in the preferences illustrated by Figure 5b, the policy concession required to avoid a veto (i.e., $b_m - b_e$) is much smaller. Finally, note that in the extreme case shown in Figure 5c, where C 's ideal point is acceptable to both types, no veto will occur. These results lead to Prediction 5:

Prediction 5 (incomplete information: veto frequency). Vetoes are more likely the larger the expected difference between the ideal points of P and C .

In the interest of brevity, we omit an analysis of this model with a veto override. But such an analysis produces a parallel result:⁷

Prediction 6 (incomplete information: veto frequency). Vetoes are more likely the larger the expected difference between the ideal points of O and C .

⁷This prediction is also generated by Magar's (2003b) Stunt model, which we discuss briefly below.

5. MODELS WITH REPUTATION, LEARNING, AND DYNAMICS

An interesting feature of the incomplete-information model is that a moderate receiver P does better if the proposer C believes P is the extreme type. This raises the possibility that P might attempt to manipulate C 's beliefs about his type—his reputation. In this section, we examine three models in which the actors try to manipulate P 's reputation. All are signaling models, because an informed player takes an action that conveys information about P 's type. In the first two models, the veto-threat and sequential veto bargaining (SVB) models, the informed player is P himself. In the third model, the blame-game veto model, both C and P take actions to convey information to uninformed voters.

5.1. Veto Threats

Ranging from the dramatic “read my lips” variety to the much more mundane “statements of administration policy” routinely produced by the Office of Management and Budget, the veto threat is an important feature of legislative politics in the United States. However, none of the models reviewed thus far provides any leverage on understanding this phenomenon. Matthews (1989), however, offers an influential model of veto threats in which the president may use a costless signal, or “cheap talk,” to reveal information about preferences and veto intentions.

To illustrate this model, it is helpful to increase the number of presidential types from two to four. Therefore, in addition to m and e , we add the two following types: r , the recalcitrant type, and a , the accommodating type. We assume that $r < q < e < m < c < a$ as in Figure 6. President r is called recalcitrant because he will veto any bill that C prefers to the status quo; a is accommodating because he prefers c to the status quo. We also assume that the probabilities of these types are π_r , π_e , π_m , and π_a . In this game, the president first makes a speech, which is simply a costless signal to the legislature. Each of these messages has no literal meaning, only a contextual one derived from the equilibrium that is being played. Following the speech, C updates her beliefs about P 's preferences and then makes a proposal, which P can either accept or reject.

As a baseline, first consider an equilibrium where the president's speeches contain no information because each type makes the same speech. In this babbling equilibrium, C will simply choose the bill from $b_r = q$, b_e , b_m , or $b_a = c$ that maximizes her utility. For any such choice, those with lower types will veto. For example, if C chooses b_m , e and r will veto so that the veto probability is $\pi_r + \pi_e$.

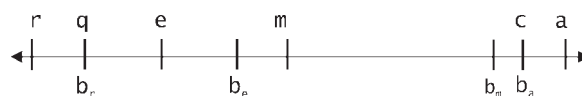


Figure 6 Complete-information proposals.

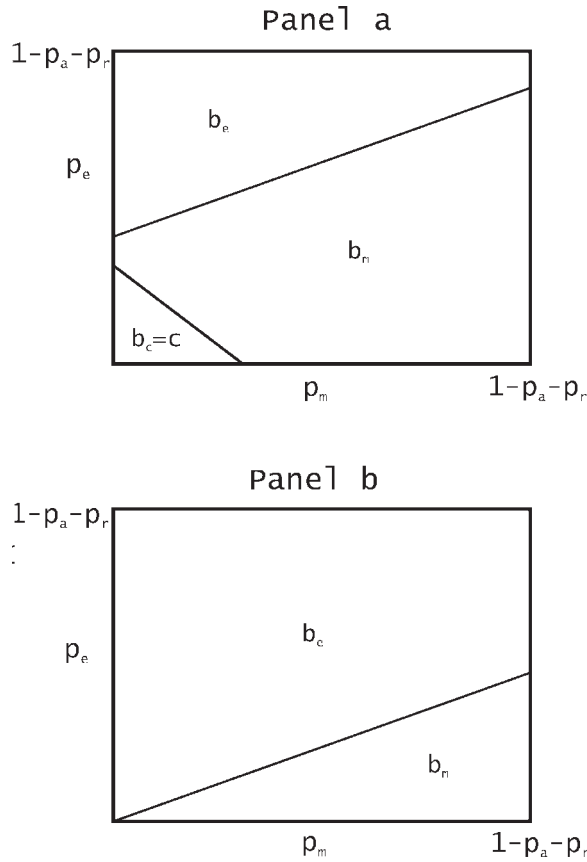


Figure 7 Veto threats. (a) Proposals in “babbling equilibrium”; (b) proposals in “two-message equilibrium” following compromising message.

Rather than present the formulae for the conditions for each proposal, we illustrate them in Figure 7. Figure 7a shows which proposal will be made in the babbling equilibrium for different values of π_m and π_e for given values on π_a and π_r . Note that the proposal $b_r = q$ is never made because C always does at least as well with a vetoed proposal. Note that this equilibrium is somewhat bad from the president’s perspective. If the president is type a , there is a utility loss associated with the fact that C may propose the less desirable policies b_m and b_e . For president m , there are losses associated with the fact that C might propose c (which he then vetoes) rather than his preferred b_e . Because r and e only get their status quo utility from all proposals, they are not affected. C is also affected by the lack of information, as it may force her either to accommodate more than necessary or to risk a veto.

Given the bad outcomes from the babbling equilibrium, it is reasonable to ask whether there are other equilibria where more information is transmitted. Matthews (1989) shows that some information can be revealed in presidential speeches, but not all of it. First, consider why a separating equilibrium in which every presidential type gives a distinct speech cannot exist. If C could learn the president's type from the speech, she would optimally propose b_r to r , b_e to e , etc. However, since m prefers b_e to b_m , m would prefer to defect and give e 's speech. Thus, a separating equilibrium cannot exist. Matthews shows that the most informative equilibrium is one in which type a reveals his type with an "accommodating" speech and the other types all make the same "threatening" speech. Following an accommodating speech, C correctly infers that P will accept her ideal point, and thus proposes c . Type a is willing to make the accommodating speech, since he clearly prefers c to b_m or b_e . Following the threatening speech, C learns that the president is not a and updates her beliefs accordingly. Given these beliefs, C chooses between b_m and b_e . Figure 7b illustrates the optimal proposal as a function of π_m and π_e for given values of π_a and π_r . Note that C is more likely to propose b_e because the knowledge that the president is not type a greatly increases the probability that b_m will be vetoed.

Prediction 7 (concessions to veto threats). Congress makes a larger concession to the president's preferences following a veto threat.

It is important to note that an informative equilibrium is not guaranteed to exist. If type a prefers b_m to c to b_e , an informative equilibrium would exist only if C 's best response to the threatening message was b_e . Otherwise, type a would defect to the threat. Similarly, if type a prefers b_e to c , no informative equilibrium can exist.

It is possible for some configurations of preferences that the veto threat is merely a bluff. Consider what would happen if m were moved in Figure 6 sufficiently to the right that he preferred c to q (and thus became an accommodator) but still preferred b_e to c . In the informative equilibrium, m would still give the threatening speech, but it is a bluff in the sense that he would have signed a bill at C 's ideal point.

Prediction 8 (veto threats: bluffing). The president may issue a veto threat even though he would accept Congress's ideal point.

The informative equilibrium makes C better off; if it didn't, she could just turn off the TV and ignore the speech. However, it is possible that some presidential types will be worse off. Suppose that type a were repositioned so that his preference ordering were such that b_m was preferred to c , which was preferred to b_e . Further, suppose that the babbling equilibrium produced b_m and a threat in the more informative equilibrium produced b_e . Then type a would clearly prefer the outcome of the babbling equilibrium to the c he gets from making his accommodating speech in the informative equilibrium.

5.2. Sequential Veto Bargaining with Incomplete Information

Often, the proposer can make multiple offers, learning about the receiver as she does so. For example, if the receiver rejects a tough offer early, the proposer may believe the receiver is genuinely tough. If so, the proposer's next offer is apt to be

more accommodating. This “haggling” dynamic is very common in many types of bargaining, and one might well expect to see it in veto bargaining as well. But a complicating factor is misdirection: The proposer often has an incentive to reject early offers in order to build a reputation that leads to better later offers. Knowing this, why should the proposer actually make the compromises? The sequential veto bargaining (SVB) model explores these questions about learning and credibility.

A simple example conveys many of the basic ideas. First, consider a situation in which $q = 0$, $e = 1/4$, $m = 0.6$, and $c = 1$. By now it should be clear that in a one-shot game (without a veto threat), $b_e = 1/2$ and $b_m = c$. The techniques discussed in Section 4 and Equation 2 make it clear that C will offer $b_m = c$ if $\pi \leq 1/2$, and $b_e = 1/2$ otherwise. But suppose this is not a one-shot game, so that C may make a second offer if the first is rejected. More specifically, suppose bargaining breaks down with probability ρ , but otherwise a second offer can be made. (The probability of a bargaining breakdown reflects the inherent uncertainty of the legislative and other political processes.) Is a haggling equilibrium possible, that is, one in which C first makes a tough offer and then, following a veto and no bargaining breakdown, makes a more accommodating offer?

In such a haggling equilibrium, the moderate president must accept the tough offer in the first round (if both types rejected the tough offer, then C should make the accommodating offer lest a breakdown saddle her with the unappealing status quo). Therefore, the following “incentive compatibility constraint” must hold:

$$\begin{aligned}
 -(c - m) &\geq (1 - \rho)(m - 2e + q) - \rho(m - q) \quad \text{or} \\
 \rho &\geq \frac{c - q - 2(m - e)}{2(e - q)}. \tag{3}
 \end{aligned}$$

(The incentive compatibility constraint indicates that accepting the tough offer in the first round is better for the moderate type than rejecting the offer and holding out for the more proximate accommodating offer, taking into account the probability of a bargaining breakdown.) In the example, the critical value for the breakdown probability is 0.6. Let $\mu(e)$ be C 's belief, following a veto, that the president is the extreme type. Note that in a haggling equilibrium, it must be the case that $\mu(e) \geq 1/2$; otherwise, following a veto, C will make the tough offer again in the final period (this was proven above). But if the probability of a breakdown is greater than 0.6, then the moderate type accepts the initial offer, so that by Bayes's Rule, $\mu(e) = 1$ following a veto and C will indeed make the accommodating offer in the second round.

There remains an additional incentive compatibility constraint to examine, however. Congress must find it more appealing to make a tough offer followed by an accommodating offer (conditional on a veto and no breakdown) than to make an initial accommodating offer that would be surely accepted. This requires that

$$(1 - \pi)(-0) + \pi[(1 - \rho)(-c - 2e + q) + \rho(-c - q)] \geq -c - 2e + q$$

or

$$\pi \leq \frac{c - 2e + q}{c - 2e(1 - \rho) + q(1 - 2p)} \quad 4.$$

and in the example $\pi \leq \frac{1}{1+\rho}$.

We can now indicate a haggling equilibrium in the two-period, two-type SVB model with the ideal points indicated earlier. If $0.6 \leq \rho \leq 1$ and $\pi \leq \frac{1}{1+\rho}$, then C offers $b_1 = b_m = c$ and $b_2 = b_e = 1/2$, presidential type m accepts both b_e and b_m in both periods, presidential type e accepts offer b_e and vetoes offer b_m in both periods, and C 's belief that the president is the extreme type following a veto is $\mu(e) = 1$.

This example indicates how haggling, vetoes, and sequences of bills arise during veto bargaining. However, a somewhat more general model allowing a continuum of presidential ideal points, rather than only two, yields richer and more interesting results.

Prediction 9 (SVB: basic dynamics). In sequential veto bargaining, Congress makes concessions in repassed bills; there is a positive probability the president accepts each bill; and there is a positive probability no offer is accepted even if bargaining does not break down. Moreover, in the first period, some types of presidents are willing to strategically veto.

The possibility of strategic vetoes is particularly interesting. Here, a president vetoes a bill that he actually prefers to the status quo in order to build a policy reputation that will extract an even more favorable bill in the next period.

Cameron (2000) explores the comparative statics of this version of the SVB model in detail. Not surprisingly, many of the model's empirical predictions are identical to the simple one-shot model; for example, increased differences between proposer and receiver lead to increased veto rates. However, a novel set of predictions involves the probability of a breakdown in bargaining [denoted q in Cameron (2000) rather than ρ]. Cameron argues for a link between legislative significance and breakdown probabilities. In this view, less important bills are "brittle" whereas important ones are more robust. The idea is that, because enactment of an unimportant bill is unlikely, such a bill is unlikely to return to the legislative agenda if it is vetoed. Conversely, more important bills, propelled by powerful advocates, are quite likely to retain their place on the agenda even if they receive an initial check. Cameron shows that this differential fragility affects the dynamics of veto bargaining. In particular, bargaining is much tougher for more important bills. Hence, in the model with a continuum of types, we get Prediction 10.

Prediction 10 (SVB: effects of legislative significance). Given disagreement between the president and Congress, more important bills are more likely to be vetoed than less important ones; are more likely to be repassed if vetoed; are likely to incorporate smaller legislative concessions; and are more likely to be vetoed a second time.

Cameron (2000) also considers veto overrides in conjunction with a SVB model. For the most part, the dynamics of bargaining remain the same.

Prediction 11 (SVB: overrides and repassed bills). Congress is more likely to attempt an override on repassed bills than on initially passed ones.

Driving Prediction 11 are the concessions that follow a veto. Repassed bills are more likely to be geared for an override attempt.

Finally, Cameron uses the model with a continuum of types to uncover a deadline effect in bargaining.

Prediction 12 (SVB and deadlines). The probability of vetoes for important legislation should fall at the end of a legislative session.

The rationale for Prediction 12 turns on the strategic vetoes, discussed above. In the last period, the president has no incentive to build a reputation through strategic vetoes. Although Congress understands this and accordingly makes a tougher offer, its offers are not so much tougher as to offset the president's weaker incentive to veto.

5.3. Bargaining Over Multiple Bills

Whereas the previous section shows that incomplete information can affect the dynamics of bargaining on a single issue, McCarty (1997) considers how informational and reputational incentives alter the bargaining across multiple issues over time. He considers a model of veto bargaining with incomplete information where P and C bargain over a series of policies with status quo points q_1 and q_2 . In each of the two periods, C proposes b_t and P accepts or rejects it. Thus, bargaining over each policy is modeled as one-shot, such that if P vetoes b_t the status quo q_t is the policy outcome. Since P 's ideal point is assumed to be constant across policies, the outcome on policy 1 may provide information to C prior to her making an offer on policy 2.⁸ Because in the last period the game is identical to the one-shot incomplete-information game described above, type m does better on the second policy by having C believe that he is the extreme type if preferences are such as those given in Figures 5a or b. Thus, given those preference configurations, type m may be willing to use his first-period veto to build a reputation as the extreme type in order get a better outcome on policy 2. This involves rejecting bills that he, but not type e , prefers to q_1 . Thus, reputational incentives increase the likelihood of a veto on policy 1.

Given that C understands these incentives, she may be willing to be sufficiently accommodating on policy 1 to discourage type m from vetoing on reputational grounds. Thus, McCarty's model predicts a "honeymoon" pattern of accommodating policies early in the president's term followed by less accommodating policies toward the end when reputational incentives are diminished. However, he notes that because the existence of reputational incentives depends on preference configurations such as those in Figures 5a and 5b, this honeymoon effect is unlikely when the expected difference in ideal points between P and C is small, such as in unified governments.

⁸McCarty shows that many of the model's predictions hold so long as the president's preferences are highly correlated across policy areas.

Prediction 13 (multiple bills: the honeymoon effect). When the expected difference between the ideal points of P and C is sufficiently large, policy enactments should show a declining accommodation to the president's preferences over the course of his administration.

5.4. Blame-Game Vetoes

A recent model argues that vetoes are less a product of legislative uncertainty than of electoral politics. Groseclose & McCarty (2000) examine a model in which the legislative agenda setter uses its proposal power to signal that the president's policy views are out of step with the voters' (see Gilmour 1995 for a less formal version of similar arguments). In this "blame game" model, vetoes occur when the agenda setter receives a larger payoff from signaling that the president has extreme preferences than she does from enacting new policy. Thus, in this model, the electorate's uncertainty about the president is critical, not the uncertainty of legislators.

To understand a simple version of this model, consider a new actor V , the voter. We assume V , like P and C , has linear preferences and an ideal point (v). V believes P is type e with probability π and type m otherwise. We focus on the case where $e < m < v$. We assume the voter evaluates the president based on the expected distance between the president's ideal point and her own ideal point. Therefore, the voter's evaluation is simply

$$w(e, m, \pi; v) = -\pi|v - e| - (1 - \pi)|v - m| = \pi e + (1 - \pi)m - v. \quad 5.$$

An important feature of this model is that P and C care how much expected utility V gets from P 's position. The most interesting case is one of conflict, in which the president gets greater utility when the voter believes he is a moderate and Congress gets greater utility when the voter believes the president is an extremist. Such a case would plausibly arise when Congress and the presidency are controlled by different political parties or factions, especially when those parties are highly polarized ideologically, and voters are generally more moderate. In such a case, C and P trade off policy gains with those from political posturing. More specifically, the president would like to take actions that lead the public to lower π , whereas the legislature would like to take actions that lead the public to increase π . We allow C and P to value these trade-offs differently by letting λ_C and λ_P denote the respective weights each actor places on policy. Therefore, the utility functions for C and P become

$$-\lambda_C|x - c| + (1 - \lambda_C)[v - \pi e - (1 - \pi)m] \quad 6.$$

$$-\lambda_P|x - p| - (1 - \lambda_P)[v - \pi e - (1 - \pi)m] \quad 7.$$

An important assumption of this model is that although V is relatively uninformed about P 's preferences (p), C is fully informed. Therefore, C may be able to credibly communicate her information about p through her choice of bill.

Similarly, the president’s decision whether to veto particular proposals may also provide information to voters about his preferences.

A particularly interesting equilibrium is one in which *C* proposes an acceptable bill when *P* is moderate and proposes a bill that will be rejected when the president is extreme. McCarty (2002) shows that such an equilibrium is the only one in which vetoes occur, and it exists if and only if the following two conditions hold:

$$\left[\frac{\lambda_p - \lambda_c}{\lambda_p \lambda_c} \right] (1 - \pi)(m - e) > (2e - 2q) \tag{8}$$

$$2 > \left[\frac{\lambda_p - \lambda_c}{\lambda_p \lambda_c} \right] \pi \tag{9}$$

These conditions produce a number of predictions about the occurrence of vetoes.⁹ First, note that Equation 8 cannot be satisfied if $m = e$ or $\pi = 1$. Thus, voter uncertainty about the president’s preferences is crucial. Without this uncertainty, orchestrating a veto has no signaling value to *C*, so she might as well make acceptable proposals to both types.

Prediction 14 (blame game: voter uncertainty). Voter uncertainty about the president’s preferences is necessary for equilibrium vetoes.

Note that both Equations 8 and 9 are easier to satisfy when π is lower. Because the ex ante evaluation of the president is decreasing in π (the probability he is extreme), the model suggests that more vetoes will occur when the public believes the president is moderate (that is, believes the president is ideologically proximate). Intuitively, Congress finds the blame game most attractive when it knows that the president’s policy preferences are inconsistent with voters’ beliefs.

Prediction 15 (blame game: voter beliefs). Blame-game vetoes are more likely when the public believes the president’s policy preferences are similar to its own.

The next three predictions are based on *C* and *P*’s willingness to trade policy gains for electoral gains. Figure 8 illustrates how each of the conditions is affected by the policy weights λ_p and λ_c . The area under the higher solid line represents the combinations of λ_p and λ_c that satisfy Equation 8. The area above the lower dashed line shows those satisfying Equation 9. The blame-game equilibrium described above exists in the intersection of these regions.

First, note that the condition in Equation 8 can be met only when $\lambda_p > \lambda_c$. This suggests that the president must put more weight on the policy outcome than does Congress. If this were not the case, Congress would prefer to achieve policy gains by passing mutually attractive bills rather than to seek purely electoral advantage by passing bills the president will reject. However, the condition in Equation 9 puts an upper bound on the difference in policy weights. If λ_p is too much larger than λ_c , *C* loses the ability to signal credibly through its proposals.

Prediction 16 (blame game: policy salience). Blame-game vetoes will occur on issues that the president cares more about than does Congress.

⁹These conditions are necessary for $c > 2m - q + \frac{1 - \lambda_p}{\lambda_p}(m - e)$. Different positions of c result in slightly modified but qualitatively similar conditions.

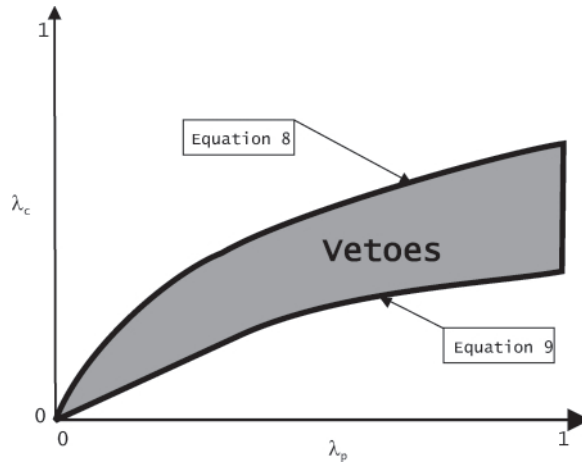


Figure 8 Conditions for equilibrium vetoes in the blame-game model.

Assuming that the policy weights are uniformly lower during election years, the model generates Prediction 17.

Prediction 17 (blame game: electoral politics). Blame-game vetoes will be more likely during election years.

Only extreme types ever veto in the blame-game model. Therefore, every veto is followed by a reduction on support from $-[v - \pi e - (1 - \pi)m]$ to $-(v - e)$.

Prediction 18 (blame game: vetoes and public approval). Vetoes lead to lower public support for the president.

Groseclose & McCarty (2000) find support for this prediction. Magar (2001) develops similar models, in which both executives and legislators care about position taking in that they derive utility not only from the outcome but from the actions that they take in the process. This modification generates equilibria with non-outcome-consequential “publicity stunts,” such as vetoing a bill when the veto is certain to be overridden or passing a bill that is certain to fail. Thus, otherwise anomalous behavior such as successful veto overrides can be sustained in equilibrium. An important distinction is that Magar’s action contingent preferences are exogenous whereas Groseclose & McCarty’s are endogenous. In particular, it is not clear why the voter in the Magar model would reward purely symbolic actions.

6. EMPIRICAL APPLICATIONS

Although this chapter is primarily theoretical in orientation, we would be remiss not to review, if only cursorily, the substantial body of empirical work that has used or tested the models reviewed here. In some cases, we note obvious gaps in the literature.

6.1. Methodological Issues

A central issue concerns the dependent variable—in particular, whether the analyst studies process measures related to bargaining (e.g., vetoes, override attempts, threats, enactments, presidential popularity) or policy directly. Policy is often the measure of greatest interest, but process indicators are far easier to observe and quantify. As indicated above, models with incomplete information often generate crisp propositions about process measures, and these can be used to test the models.

Regardless of the dependent variable, an important methodological issue arises from the three distinctive regimes that occur in many veto models, depending on the relative positions of the players' ideal points and the status quo. As discussed above, in the accommodating regime, the proposer offers her ideal point. In the compromising regime, she offers a proposal that responds to the receiver's ideal point, with a unit move in the latter forcing a unit move in the former. In the third regime, the recalcitrant regime, a successful proposal is not possible, so no offer is made. Thus, the comparative statics of both policy and process measures (e.g., vetoes) depend on which regime generated which observation. But associating observations with regimes can be problematic because of the difficulty of measuring ideal points and status quos. Analysts have tackled this problem in two ways.

The first method relies on research design, using a priori grounds to associate observations with regimes. For example, increasing the distance between the ideal points of the proposer and receiver makes the accommodating regime less likely and the compromising or recalcitrant regime more likely (*ceteris paribus*). Hence, increased distances should increase the probability of a veto, given an offer and a degree of incomplete information. Most of the empirical predictions in this chapter take this form, and most of the empirical work has this flavor.

The second approach employs endogenous regime-switching models to estimate simultaneously the probability that a given observation belongs to a regime (using appropriate indicators) and the policy outcomes associated with each regime.

Though conceptually appealing, this approach has been little used because of the difficulties of measurement and estimation [see, however, Spiller & Gely (1992) and McCarty & Poole (1995); Moraski & Shipan (1999) has this flavor but stops short of endogenous switching].

Not surprisingly, in light of the importance of regime switching, measurement issues often become central in empirical studies of veto bargaining. Typical problems include determining the location of the status quo, and placing proposers and receivers on common preference scales. There are no general solutions here; the analyst must tailor her response to each situation and sometimes display considerable ingenuity (see, e.g., Bailey & Chang 2001).

6.2. Experimental Studies

Laboratory experiments often afford the cleanest setting for testing game theoretic models of social interactions. For example, one can definitively address regime and

measurement issues. Thus, one might expect to find a well-developed experimental literature on veto models. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Within economics, there is a vast literature on the ultimatum game, which strongly resembles the compromising regime in veto games. In the ultimatum game, a proposer offers a receiver a division x of a pie, retaining $1 - x$ for herself; if the receiver rejects the proposal, both receive zero. Camerer (2003) and Roth (1995) elegantly review findings from this literature. Typical results are (a) proposers do not make as tough an offer as theory predicts, and (b) receivers sometimes reject stingy offers that theory predicts they ought to accept. The explanation for these departures from the theoretical predictions remains a subject of controversy.

Unfortunately, the ultimatum game is not isomorphic even to the one-shot veto game, since the ultimatum game lacks two of the relevant regimes as well as comparative statics on the location of the status quo in the compromise regime. Veto games with repeated play, reputation, threats, and third-party audiences are even farther removed from the ultimatum game. To the best of our knowledge, political scientists have conducted little or no experimental work on veto games, especially those with repeat play, reputation, and third-party audiences. This is an obvious area for research.

6.3. Studies on Observational Data

Purely empirical studies of the veto abound, many of which are reviewed in Cameron (2000). More recent examples not referenced there include additional studies of veto probabilities for individual bills (Gilmour 2002, Sinclair 2002), veto threats (Conley 2002, Deen & Arnold 2002, Jarvis 2002, Marshal 2003), and override politics (Conley 2000, 2003; Manning 2003; Whittaker 2003; Wilkins & Young 2002). Comparative politics scholars increasingly draw on veto models to interpret case study materials from a variety of countries (see, e.g., Lehoucq & Molina 2002, Remington 2001). Rarer, however, are studies in which systematic observational data confront formally derived hypotheses from game theoretic models of the veto. We focus on these studies below.

6.3.1. COMPLETE-INFORMATION MODEL The complete-information model examines the consequences of veto power rather than vetoes. Tests of the model relate changes in preferences to changes in policy. For example, Kiewiet & McCubbins (1988) examine appropriations politics. Taking into account the normal reversion points in the appropriations process, they argue that the veto gives the president strong power when he wants to cut budgets but much less power when he wants to increase them. Their statistical analysis of appropriations data supports their argument. Krehbiel (1998) and Brady & Volden (1998) embed complete-information veto models in larger models of law making under the separation of powers. Both find a variety of systematic evidence supporting these “gridlock” models. Cameron (2000, pp. 169–76) and Howell et al. (2000) argue that patterns

in the legislative productivity of Congress are compatible with predictions of a complete-information veto model.

6.3.2. VETO THREATS Cameron (2000, pp. 178–202) tests many predictions from the Matthews model of veto threats, as do Cameron et al. (2000), using data on threats from Truman to Clinton. The evidence they muster strongly supports the model. Evans & Ng (2003) use more extensive systematic evidence from the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations to test the Matthews model. They too find strong support, but they also find evidence of a blame-game dynamic in veto threats (see also Conley 2001).

6.3.3. SEQUENTIAL VETO BARGAINING AND BARGAINING OVER MULTIPLE BILLS Cameron (2000) uses the SVB model to explain many patterns in the use of the veto in the postwar era. In addition, he tests hypotheses on concessions and the deadline effect. He finds very substantial empirical support for the model. The distinction this model makes between more important and less important legislation has not been exploited as fully in empirical work as one could imagine.

McCarty (1997) examines the “honeymoon” prediction generated by the multiple-bills model. Rather than using data on actual bill locations, he uses data on average presidential support scores, which would tend to decline as legislative proposals move away from the president’s expected ideal point. Consistent with his prediction, he finds that presidential support scores decline during periods of divided, but not unified, government. McCarty & Poole (1995) also find evidence for a honeymoon effect using data on bill locations and status quos estimated by D-NOMINATE (Poole & Rosenthal 1997).

6.3.4. BLAME-GAME VETOES One of the principal predictions of the blame-game model is that presidential popularity should fall after a blame-game veto. Groseclose & McCarty (2000) test this prediction and find support in presidential job approval ratings. McCarty (2002) marshals a variety of evidence from the early Republic, testing the blame-game model and in some instances contrasting it with predictions of the simple incomplete-information model. He finds support for the blame-game model, especially relative to the simple incomplete-information model. Magar (2001, 2003a) applies his closely related model of “stunt” vetoes to data from several Latin American countries, especially Argentina and Uruguay, and also finds support for the model. Finally, Gilmour (2001) uses newspaper coverage of vetoes to test the informational assumptions underlying sequential veto bargaining and the blame-game model. He argues that under the SVB model, vetoes should surprise members of Congress (and journalists for that matter), whereas the blame-game model is consistent with vetoes that even the voters can predict in equilibrium. His study finds that most, but not all, vetoes were predicted by the news coverage, which he interprets as evidence in favor of the blame-game model.

6.4. Summary

A substantial empirical literature examines the presidential veto. Much of this literature investigates ad hoc hypotheses unsupported by theory, or repeatedly replicates simple and well-known patterns predicted by almost every model. A smaller number of studies attempt to test formal models of veto bargaining in a methodologically sophisticated way against appropriate data. The studies that have attempted this task have found repeated and substantial support for the models.

7. CONCLUSION

The study of veto bargaining has developed into a successful social scientific endeavor. This literature contains a rich set of explicit models with generally clear empirical predictions. Its large set of claims, sometimes complementary and sometimes competing, have proven a rich source of hypotheses for empirical research, and this research has undoubtedly increased our knowledge of the veto power and its role in executive-legislative relations.

Despite this success, there remains much to be gained from pushing forward on the theoretical and empirical fronts. On the theoretical side, current models are somewhat limited by their simple informational and preference structures. The extent to which equilibrium veto bargaining is substantially different in a world with multidimensional preferences and signaling is still an open question. The incorporation of electoral politics and public opinion is also rudimentary. For example, the Groseclose-McCarty model allows voters to learn about presidential preferences, but not congressional ones, and is also limited to preferences along a single dimension.

Open empirical questions abound as well. Much of the empirical literature has naturally centered on data from the post-World War II U.S. national government. But with dozens of presidential democracies and 50 U.S. states providing variation both in the rules for veto bargaining and in electoral systems, there is much more to be learned from the data (see Magar 2001, 2003b). New opportunities for analyzing political history are also apparent.

8. APPENDIX

8.1. Proposition 1

The subgame perfect equilibrium to the complete information veto game is as follows.

President: Accept any bill such that either $v(b, p) \geq v(q, p)$ or $u_o(x; o) > u_o(b; o)$.

Override pivot: Override any veto such that $u_o(x; o) > u_o(b; o)$.

Congress: Make the following proposals:

Case 1: $c > \max\{o, p\}$.

If $c > \max\{o, p\} > q$, $b^* = \min\{c, \max\{2o - q, 2p - q\}\}$.

If $c > q > \max\{o, p\}$, make no proposal.

If $q > c$, $b^* = c$.

Case 2: $c < \min\{o, p\}$.

If $c < \min\{o, p\} < q$, $b^* = \max\{c, \min\{2o - q, 2p - q\}\}$.

If $c < q < \min\{o, p\}$, make no proposal.

If $q < c$, $b^* = c$.

Case 3: $p < c < o$, $b^* = c$.

Case 4: $o < c < p$, $b^* = c$.

8.2. Incomplete Information Models

We wish to establish the critical values of π given in Equations 1 and 2. Thus, we consider only the preference configurations in Figure 5, i.e., $q < e < m < c$. Other configurations are quite simple to analyze and are left to the reader.

Let $B_t(q)$ be the set of bills that each type $t \in \{m, e\}$ is willing to accept over the status quo. As above, these sets are $[q, 2t - q]$ if $t > q$ and $[2t - q, q]$ otherwise. Notice that for any q , a president of type m is willing to accept a higher bill that is e . For simplicity, let $e > q$, so that $b_e(q) = [q, 2e - q] \subset b_m(q) = [q, 2m - q]$ —any bill that e accepts is also acceptable to m , but the converse is not true. Therefore, C faces a tradeoff. She can propose $2e - q$, which both types accept, or can propose $2m - q$, which e will veto. Given C 's beliefs, the latter strategy results in a veto with probability π .

CASE 1: $c > 2m - q$ Given C 's linear utility function, her payoffs from $b = 2e - q$ are $2e - q - c$ and her payoffs from $b = 2m - q$ are $\pi q + (1 - \pi)(2m - q) - c$. If $\pi < \frac{m - e}{m - q}$, C will propose $b = 2m - q$ and a veto may occur.

CASE 2: $2e - q < c < 2m - q$ C 's payoff from $b = 2e - q$ is $2e - q - c$. Her payoffs from $b = c$ are $\pi(q - c)$. Therefore, C will adopt the risky strategy when $\pi < \frac{c + q - 2e}{c - q}$. Note that the critical value of π is lower than in Case 1, which makes a veto less likely for any given set of beliefs.

CASE 3: $c < 2e - q$ In this case, neither president will veto $b = c$. So C maximizes her utility by proposing her ideal point, and no vetoes occur.

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DEMOCRATIC POLITICS IN LATIN AMERICA: New Debates and Research Frontiers

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Key Words democracy, democratic regimes, quality of democracy, presidentialism, institutionalism

■ **Abstract** This assessment of research on contemporary democratic politics in Latin America is organized around the distinction between institutional and alternative approaches. Initially it considers institutionalism on its own terms and, through an assessment of the debate about the institutional causes of gridlock, draws attention to key strengths of this literature. Thereafter, this article adopts a broader perspective that exposes some limitations but also other strengths of institutional analyses and considers the possibility of combining insights developed from institutional and alternative theoretical perspectives. The suggested terms of integration are as follows. With regard to causal theorizing, institutionalists need to borrow ideas from a broader literature on political regimes, especially regarding the causes of transitions to, and the breakdown of, democracy. With regard to descriptive theorizing, in contrast, students of the quality of democracy need to incorporate the contributions of institutionalists, especially regarding principal-agent relationships among citizens, policy makers, and policy administrators. Throughout this review, various pointed suggestions to advance research are offered.

INTRODUCTION

Latin American politics has recently undergone a fundamental transformation. For many decades prior to the 1990s, most elected leaders could not discount the possibility of military coups, and most authoritarian rulers could not ignore the actions of antiauthoritarian movements. Now, in contrast, elections are held regularly, winners take office and make legally binding decisions, and losers and new players prepare for the next election. Latin America has made a clear break with its past.

This characterization of Latin American countries as functioning democracies has far-reaching implications. Most obviously, it means that the study of contemporary Latin American politics should focus squarely, though not necessarily exclusively, on the process whereby elected leaders, working through the institutions of democracy, make decisions. After all, among other things, politics is

about the making of legally binding decisions, and the power to make such decisions is held by democratically elected leaders who operate according to the rules of democratic institutions. Hence, it is sensible to focus attention on democratic actors and institutions.

This core insight has been at the center of work by institutionalists, understood here as scholars who employ a theory of institutions that holds that actors make choices in response to institutional incentives and who emphasize the causal import of institutions. Therefore, the institutional literature is a major source of knowledge on current Latin American politics. But an assessment of research on democratic politics in Latin America cannot overlook the limitations of the institutional literature and the contributions of scholars using other theoretical approaches.

Seeking to provide a pluralistic assessment of recent research on Latin American politics, this article focuses first on the debate about the impact of executive-legislative relations on the problem of indecisiveness, that is, the occurrence of gridlock or stalemate between the executive and legislative branches of government. This is probably the most developed debate in the institutional literature at present, and it demonstrates some of the key virtues of institutional research. It shows how institutionalists have exploited the opportunity to draw on models and theories from the rich literature on the democracies of the United States and Western Europe but have also gone further, using the experience of Latin American politics to question assumptions in the existing literature—especially concerning presidential democracies—and to underline the need for new theorizing. Moreover, it demonstrates how debates among institutionalists are sophisticated (relying on the intertwining of systematic theory building and data analysis) and progressive (leading to new findings and questions). In short, this debate illustrates some of the contributions and strengths of an institutional approach.

After focusing on the institutional literature on its own terms, this article adopts a broader perspective that exposes some limitations but also other strengths of institutional analyses and considers the possibility of combining insights developed from institutional and alternative theoretical perspectives. The suggested terms of integration are as follows. With regard to causal theorizing, institutionalists need to borrow ideas from a broader literature on political regimes, especially regarding the causes of transitions to, and the breakdown of, democracy. With regard to descriptive theorizing, in contrast, students of the quality of democracy need to incorporate the contributions of institutionalists, especially regarding principal-agent relationships among citizens, policy makers, and policy administrators. Thus, a core thesis of this article is that advances in causal and descriptive theorizing are increasingly likely to hinge on the willingness and ability of scholars to incorporate insights from institutional and alternative theoretical perspectives. A bridging of theoretical perspectives, to be sure, still leaves a range of methodological problems to be resolved. But, as various pointed suggestions made in this article seek to show, such theoretical advances have important methodological consequences, helping to pinpoint where the problems lie and to guide the search for solutions.

INSTITUTIONALISM ON ITS OWN TERMS: THE DEBATE ON THE INSTITUTIONAL CAUSES OF GRIDLOCK

Institutional theories of Latin American democracies focused initially on two shared features of these democracies: national executive officers who (*a*) are popularly elected and (*b*) serve for a fixed term.¹ These features, which distinguish Latin American democracies from parliamentary democracies, were used to define them as presidential democracies.² And they were cast, in the work by Linz (1990; 1994, pp. 5–10; Linz & Stepan 1996, p. 181), as a source of multiple problems, including a tendency toward gridlock or stalemate between the executive and legislative branches of government.³ This statement did much to frame the debate, and its seminal value should be recognized. However, from this starting point, the literature has evolved considerably, first introducing a number of concepts that added greater nuance to the concept of presidential democracy, and subsequently amending and ultimately challenging the association posited by Linz.

Varieties of Presidentialism

The first development in the literature shifted attention beyond the two distinctive features of presidential democracies. One strand of the literature looked beyond the fact that the heads of the national executive in Latin America are elected for a fixed term and focused on the presidents' constitutional powers and the effects of these powers on executive-legislative relations. This research distinguished between nonlegislative powers, which refer to the formation and dismissal of the cabinet and the dissolution of the assembly, and legislative powers, which include the powers of veto, decree, and exclusive initiation of bills (Carey & Shugart 1998; Payne et al. 2002, ch. 8; Shugart & Carey 1992, chs. 6–8; Shugart & Mainwaring 1997, pp. 40–52). This literature also introduced the useful distinctions between reactive legislative powers, which help a president maintain the status quo, and

¹Currently, the only partial exception to this general statement is Bolivia, where a 1994 constitutional amendment calls for Congress to select the president from between the two candidates who received the highest percentage of the popular vote.

²These two features are used by Lijphart (1984, pp. 68–71) to construct a typology of democracies centered on executive-legislative relations. See also Shugart & Mainwaring (1997, pp. 14–18).

³To avoid misunderstandings, two points should be stressed. First, although the current discussion focuses on the issue of gridlock, Linz's work on presidentialism and parliamentarism, going back to his first significant reference to the issue (Linz 1978, pp. 71–74), has always been concerned with the broader question of democratic stability. Second, although some authors appear to use the terms indecisiveness and governability interchangeably (Cox & McCubbins 2001, p. 46), it is important to note that the concept of indecisiveness (that is, gridlock) is linked with the ability to change the legislative status quo, regardless of what this status quo is. Therefore, "indecisiveness" is more precise but also much thinner than the often-used concept of democratic governability.

proactive legislative powers, which help a president change the status quo (Shugart & Mainwaring 1997, p. 41).

Another strand of the literature focused on executive-legislative relations primarily in terms of the party system. This research approached the party system in different ways, but much of it followed the lead of Sartori's (1976) classic *Parties and Party Systems* and focused on two key dimensions: the number of parties and the degree of ideological polarization among parties (Alcántara & Freidenberg 2001; Coppedge 1998, 2001, 2003; Mainwaring 1999; Mainwaring & Scully 1995). A growing and shared emphasis was also put on the ability of party leaders to deliver votes, especially as a function of party discipline (Carey 2002, 2003; Mainwaring & Shugart 1997b, pp. 421–29; Morgenstern 2003; Shugart & Carey 1992, pp. 175–76, 1995). To a large extent, this literature's concerns were captured in the phrase “presidential partisan powers,” understood to refer to the number of legislators a president can rely on to get legislation approved (Coppedge 2003, pp. 7–10; Mainwaring & Shugart 1997b, pp. 400–1, 429–30).

This research had important consequences for the way presidential democracies were described. It undermined the common contrast between presidential and parliamentary democracies built on the contrast between the United States, which has a weak president, and Britain, which has a powerful prime minister. Indeed, the data showed that democratic presidents do not necessarily face strong congresses. Rather, Latin American presidents were shown to vary considerably in terms of their constitutional powers and have, on average, considerably greater legislative powers than the president of the United States (Payne et al. 2002, p. 202; Shugart & Carey 1992, p. 155).

In addition, some interesting patterns were revealed when the data on presidential legislative powers were considered alongside the data on presidential partisan powers (see Figure 1). Not only did this analysis highlight the rarity of the United States' model of a presidential democracy with a relatively weak president and a two-party system. In addition, it uncovered an intriguing finding: that there is a positive relationship between, on the one hand, presidents' constitutional powers and, on the other hand, party fragmentation in the legislature, presidents' electoral coalitions (Mainwaring & Shugart 1997b, pp. 429–34, 400–3), and a range of electoral arrangements that affect the degree of separation of purpose—due to differences in preferences—between the executive and legislative branches (Cox & McCubbins 2001, Samuels & Shugart 2003, Shugart & Haggard 2001).⁴ In a nutshell, by moving beyond a focus on the distinctive features of presidential democracies—the election process and tenure of the chief executive—and by considering the powers and preferences of decision makers, this literature replaced the picture of presidential democracies as a homogenous type of democracy with one that highlighted significant differences within the set of presidential democracies.

⁴This is a robust finding (Shugart & Haggard 2001, p. 99), that is, it has been confirmed with a number of different measures.

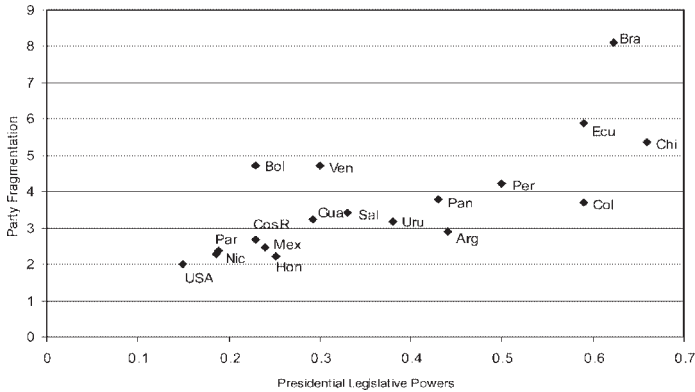


Figure 1 Presidential legislative powers and party fragmentation Latin America and the United States. The index of presidential legislative powers is for 2002. It goes from 0 to 1 and draws on data on the following powers: package and partial vetoes, decree, budget, exclusive introduction of legislation, and plebiscite. The measure of party fragmentation is an average for the 1990–2002 period and is the Laasko and Taagapera index on effective number of parties calculated on the basis of seats. Source: UNDP (2004 statistical compendium).

Revisiting Linz’s Hypothesis About Gridlock

This research on varieties of presidentialism also contributed to new theorizing about the impact of executive-legislative relations on the problem of gridlock. Linz’s arguments were dissected in detail and specific disagreements were noted (Mainwaring & Shugart 1997c; Shugart & Carey 1992, ch. 3; Shugart & Mainwaring 1997, pp. 29–40). But this new research did not lead to a full-blown rejection of Linz’s concern about the negative impact of presidentialism. Rather, the scholars who focused on the varieties of presidentialism contributed to a partial revision of Linz’s early critique.

The clearest line of continuity with Linz took the form of research that emphasized the dispersal of preferences of decision makers. The specifics of the arguments varied. One strand of this literature insisted that gridlock is likely when presidential partisan powers are low; in particular, it underlined the problematic status of the combination of presidentialism and fragmented, multiparty systems (Jones 1996; Mainwaring 1993; 1999, pp. 285–86, 288–89; Mainwaring & Shugart 1997b, p. 396, Shugart & Mainwaring 1997, p. 31). Another strand of the literature argued that gridlock (or what several authors called the problem of indecisiveness) is likely in the context of extreme separation of purpose, as determined not only by party preferences but also by institutional incentives associated especially with the electoral system (Cox & McCubbins 2001, Shugart & Haggard 2001, pp. 95–97). But these associations, which were probed empirically—above all in a number of case studies, including various ones on Brazil (Ames 2001; Mainwaring 1993, 1999)—were seen as sharing a common theoretical foundation. Indeed,

inasmuch as a theoretical basis for these associations was spelled out, it was done, if somewhat loosely, in terms of Tsebelis's (1995, 2002) theory of veto players. The core argument, captured nicely in the pithy summary by Cox & McCubbins (2001, p. 27, italics in original removed), was that "as the effective number of vetoes increases, the polity becomes. . . less decisive."

Thus, this new research on varieties of presidentialism ended up supporting Linz's generic idea about the problematic nature of presidential democracies but also introduced two important amendments. On the one hand, the broad contrast between presidential and parliamentary democracies was de-emphasized, and the problem with presidential democracies was not seen as linked to presidentialism per se, that is, to the distinctive election process and tenure of the chief executive (Shugart & Haggard 2001, p. 96). Indeed, in the view of Haggard et al. (2001, p. 321), "many of the disabilities attributed to presidentialism are in fact due to peculiarities of the party system, and in turn how parties are shaped by electoral rules." On the other hand, the new research found that the problem with presidential democracies was linked with certain values of the variables that were emphasized—extreme party fractionalization, for example—and was thus limited to a subset of presidential democracies.

A somewhat different perspective on the issue has begun to emerge, however, as the dispersal of preferences of decision makers has been considered as a factor that influences policy decisiveness not in isolation but through its interaction with other factors. In this regard, Cox & Morgenstern's (2002) informal game theoretical analysis, which models the relationship between presidents and legislatures as an asymmetric bilateral veto game, is particularly instructive.⁵ Indeed, their introduction of a strategic perspective moves the debate forward in two critical ways. First, it highlights the limitations of the conventional view that an increase in the number of players increases the probability of policy indecisiveness. Indeed, as Cox & Morgenstern's typology of presidents and assemblies shows, presidents may be effective in enacting policies by using different strategies according to the type of legislature they face (Cox & Morgenstern 2002, pp. 453–55). Second, it emphasizes the drawback of treating the key variable of legislative support for presidential initiatives as an exogenous variable. Even though Cox & Morgenstern follow the standard practice of considering the number of seats held by supporters of the president as both a key factor and one that is exogenous to their game, they do draw attention to what they label presidential integrative powers, such as the appointment of ministers, which a president can use to become directly involved in the legislative process. Therefore, they offer at least some leads for moving beyond the standard approach by endogenizing legislative support for presidential initiatives (Cox & Morgenstern 2002, pp. 452, 458–62).

⁵The break with a Linzian perspective begins with the pioneering research on the impact of executive-legislative relations on legislative performance in Brazil by Figueiredo & Limongi (2000a, originally published in Portuguese in 1995) and the work on coalitions by Deheza (1997), Amorim Neto (1998), and Altman (2000, 2001).

These are fundamental points, and this analysis represents an important departure in the debate initiated by Linz. Yet it is the research of Cheibub, Przeworski, and Saiegh that introduces the most significant alternative perspective to date in this debate (Cheibub 2002; Cheibub et al. 2002, 2004; Saiegh 2002). These authors combine formal theorizing with a heavy dose of systematic analysis of new data, on both presidential and parliamentary democracies, aimed at establishing some basic facts about the formation and legislative success of majority and minority governments. And their analysis offers a strong challenge to the alleged link between presidentialism and gridlock, as formulated in both the original and the amended version of Linz's thesis.

With regard to the formation of governments, these authors find that majority governments are less rare than might be expected in light of the data on party fractionalization. Of 218 situations (defined by a constant distribution of legislative seats) in almost all presidential democracies during the 1946–1999 period, the president's party held a majority of seats in 98 instances, whereas presidents faced an opposition majority in only 23 instances. Moreover, divided government occurred more frequently in the context of the United States's two-party system (12 times) than in all of Latin America (five times). In addition, in the remaining 97 situations (which, because of shifts in government or portfolio coalitions in the context of a constant distribution of seats, added six more alternatives), the president was the head of a majority coalition in 31 of a total of 103 instances, the head of a minority coalition in 23 of 103 instances, and the head of a single-party minority in the remaining 49 of 103 instances. Finally, when Cheibub et al. (2002, 2004) compare nearly all presidential democracies to parliamentary democracies during 1946–1999, they find that presidents led majority governments in 59% of all situations, whereas the corresponding figure for prime ministers was 78%, and that the effect of increased party fractionalization on the likelihood of minority presidents is indeterminate. These findings, it bears emphasizing, are bolstered by the formal model of coalition formation under presidentialism the authors propose (Cheibub et al. 2004).

In turn, with regard to the legislative success of governments, these authors question the supposed efficacy of majority governments, a basic presupposition of pessimistic readings of presidential democracies. Thus, analyzing data on 35 democracies over the 1946–2000 period (Saiegh 2002), they show that even though presidents who lead single-party majority governments have the highest legislative success rate (72%), presidents who lead single-party minority governments perform only slightly worse (61%) and actually do better than when they lead coalition minority governments (53%) or even coalition majority governments (51%). The ability of minority governments to form majority legislative coalitions, well established in the context of parliamentary democracies (Strom 1990), seems to not be altogether foreign to presidential democracies. Moreover, the rate of legislative success of all presidential democracies is 62% as opposed to 80% for all parliamentary democracies (Cheibub et al. 2004). Even in Brazil, a "most likely case" of legislative paralysis according to many theories, the data show high rates of legislative success (Cheibub & Limongi 2002, pp. 172–74, Figueiredo & Limongi

2000b). In short, the worries about gridlock in presidential democracies appear to be unsupported by the data.

New Findings and Questions

The debate on the impact of executive-legislative relations on policy indecisiveness is certainly not closed (Samuels & Eaton 2002). Nonetheless, it is possible to identify some valuable findings that have emerged from it. Some of the findings contradict views that were widespread not long ago, undermining the depiction of presidential democracies based on the United States and the contrast between presidential and parliamentary democracies that relied heavily on the differences between the United States and the United Kingdom. The United States, it turns out, is an extreme case, characterized by a weak president (Shugart & Carey 1992). In addition, a set of other assumptions, which are central to research on the United States and are used (more or less unconsciously) as constants in the analysis of institutions, do not hold in Latin America (Morgenstern 2002a, pp. 15–18; 2002b). And transforming these constants into variables opens up new questions, for example, about the use of cabinet appointments as an instrument in building legislative coalitions (Amorim Neto 1998; Cox & Morgenstern 2002, pp. 458–59, 464; Cheibub et al. 2004). Furthermore, certain features generally seen as typical of parliamentary democracies, such as the call for elections in the case of the dissolution of a government—a factor regarded as a key determinant of party discipline in parliamentary systems—are not so typical after all (Cheibub & Limongi 2002, p. 160).

Other findings paint a new picture of Latin American presidential democracies. It is noteworthy that Latin American presidential systems, though displaying great variation, occupy an intermediate position between pure presidential and pure parliamentary systems, with proactive presidents and reactive legislatures that are not as passive as some have feared (Cox & Morgenstern 2002). Moreover, Latin American presidents neither lack support in the legislature nor are hobbled by gridlock. Indeed, presidents rarely face a majority opposition in the legislature, and frequently they are from the party that holds a majority in the legislature or head a majority coalition. But even presidents who lead minority governments are not especially prone to the use of decree powers. Finally, presidential democracies are linked with governments that are only slightly less effective at legislating than are parliamentary democracies (Cheibub et al. 2004; Cheibub & Limongi 2002, p. 171). Thus, the difference between presidential and parliamentary democracies, understood as hinging strictly on the fact that in presidential democracies both the chief executive and members of the legislature are popularly elected and serve for a fixed term, does not appear to determine the ability of the government to legislate (Shugart & Haggard 2001, p. 96; Cheibub & Limongi 2002; Cheibub et al. 2004).⁶

⁶It bears repeating that the dependent variable at stake is policy decisiveness. Thus, these conclusions should not be understood as implying anything about other dependent variables, such as the stability of democracy or the content of policies, which are sometimes considered as effects of the same causal factors.

Beyond these findings, recent studies further advance this line of inquiry by focusing either on new questions that have been brought to light in the course of the debate or on new institutions that have not been considered in this debate. The research on new questions addresses, among other things, aspects of the behavior of parties in the legislature that are seen as critical to understanding executive-legislative relations. More specifically, growing attention has been given to the challenge of unraveling how presidential powers and various institutional rules—from electoral and party laws to the procedural rules that govern decision making in the legislature and the structure of its committees—affect party unity and the formation of coalitions (Amorim Neto 1998; Amorim Neto & Santos 2001; Altman 2000, 2001; Carey 2002, 2003; Deheza 1997; Figueiredo & Limongi 2000b; Morgenstern 2003; Morgenstern & Nacif 2002). Meanwhile, work intended to extend the discussion about the impact of government actors and institutional arrangements on policy making beyond executive-legislative relations has focused on state governors and federalism (Samuels 2003) and on judges and the judicial branch of government (Helmke 2002).

In summary, as this debate on the institutional determinants of policy indecisiveness shows, this institutional research has had substantial payoffs. It has generated some significant findings that offer a solid basis for a depiction of the policy-making process. It has raised new questions, triggered by puzzles that emerged in the course of research, and focused on new institutions, included in the analysis in an effort to encompass the complete set of relevant government actors. Moreover, this research has been cumulative in the sense that it relies on a shared set of theoretical assumptions, that is, the assumptions that are characteristic of an institutional approach to the study of democratic politics. Thus, it is important to acknowledge the contributions made by this body of research and to recognize the value of institutionalists' ongoing efforts to further our knowledge about democratic politics in Latin America. However, it is also critical to move beyond an assessment of institutionalism on its own terms. Adopting a broader perspective exposes some limitations of institutional analyses and raises the possibility of combining insights developed from institutional and alternative theoretical perspectives. But it also highlights some further contributions made by institutionalists. Indeed, as I suggest, with regard to causal theorizing, which addresses cause-effect relationships, institutionalists need to borrow ideas from a broader literature on political regimes. Yet, with regard to descriptive theorizing, which addresses part-whole relationships, students of the quality of democracy need to incorporate the contributions of institutionalists.

CAUSAL THEORIZING: INSTITUTIONS IN CONTEXT

The need for a research agenda on democratic politics in Latin America that avoids the limitations of institutionalism is not hard to establish. Most obviously, some of the causal assumptions made by institutionalists are refuted by well-established facts. But the tendency of critiques to overshoot the mark and in the process to discard valuable contributions—generically about the way in which institutions

serve as markers of political power and more specifically about the decision-making process of democratic leaders—is quite common. Thus, the following discussion proceeds cautiously, addressing the limitations of institutionalism head-on yet suggesting that institutions should not be disregarded but rather put in context. Only in this way is it possible to offer a proper evaluation of the core assumption of institutionalism: that institutions matter.

The Reform of Democratic Institutions

The most immediate limitation of an institutional approach is its treatment of the institutions of functioning democracies as exogenous to the decision-making process of democratic authorities. Institutionalism rests on a theory of institutions that holds that actors make choices in response to institutional incentives. These incentives may be indeterminate, so that courses of action do not follow strictly, in a one-to-one fashion, from specific institutions. But actors are seen as making choices *within* institutions. Indeed, it is this assumption that justifies the proposal of causal models that treat institutions as independent variables. Yet this defining feature of an institutional approach rests on shaky grounds (see Table 1).

There is much evidence that the actors who are supposed to make choices within institutions also make choices about institutions. Examples of this are the frequent institutional reforms made in Latin America in recent times. Indeed, one of the important facts about democratic politics in Latin America is that institutional reforms, whether involving the constitution or electoral and party laws, are quite common. Considering just the period since 1990, new constitutions have been approved in Colombia (1991), the Dominican Republic (1994), Ecuador (1998),

TABLE 1 Causal assumptions of an institutional approach

Choice	Assumption	Problem: Remedy
Independent variables: government actors and democratic institutions	Democratic institutions are exogenous variables	Unjustified bracketing of the reform of democratic institutions: Account for the reproduction or change of democratic institutions
Case selection: stable democracies	The selection of cases into the set of stable democracies is unrelated to the configuration of government actors and institutions, and a government's policy decisions	Unjustified bracketing of the regime question: Account for the entry of cases into the set of stable democracies (i.e., democratic transitions) and the exit of cases from the set of stable democracies (i.e., democratic breakdowns).
	The level of democracy and stability of democracy are constants	Unjustified bracketing of the regime question: Turn the democraticness and stability of the regime into variables in the causal model

Paraguay (1992), Peru (1993), and Venezuela (1999); and significant constitutional amendments have been made in all the other Latin American countries. These changes have affected, among other things, the possibility of reelection of the president, the use of a runoff or second round in presidential elections, the existence of an upper chamber, various aspects of the electoral system for the legislature, the rules regulating the formation and continued recognition of political parties, and the legislative powers of the president. In short, institutional reforms have been common and profound.

Thus, contrary to the assumption in the standard approach to institutions, the politics of Latin American democracies does not demonstrate a clear distinction between institution crafters and policy makers, between constitution framers and everyday politicians. There are no dignified founding fathers that stand above the fray of politics, and normal politicians frequently do not take institutions as fixed. Rather, these politicians appear to follow institutional rules as long as the rules allow them to advance their interests, and they seek to change the rules when they do not work for them.⁷ They may very well be unable to change these rules, but this is a different matter. The lack of institutional reform is not a consequence of the “stickiness” of institutions. Rather, institutional stasis is probably simply due to the power of actors who support the status quo institutional arrangement.

The implication of this picture of the way politicians make choices has yet to be incorporated in the analysis of institutions. The literature that uses an institutional approach does not tire of repeating that institutions matter and, inasmuch as it focuses solely on institutions, it appears to make the case that they do. But so far it has done little to address the conditions that enable the reproduction of institutions or lead to a change in institutions, and thus to distinguish the effects of these conditions from the effects of institutions themselves. Rather, this literature simply brackets this question and treats the reform of democratic institutions as though it were not connected to the democratic decision-making process. And, as a result of this theoretical choice, existing assessments of the effects of institutions are necessarily biased.

The solution to this problem hinges on the construction of causal models that are more complex than those proposed in conventional institutional analysis. Specifically, to test the alternative hypothesis concerning the reform of democratic institutions advanced from a noninstitutionalist perspective, empirical tests should be based on causal models that endogenize institutions by explicitly including choices about institutions among the menu of choices routinely made by politicians. That is, hypotheses about institutions should be tested using nonrecursive causal models that treat institutions as explanatory factors but also allow for the possibility of reverse causation by including a feedback loop to capture the potential impact of the policy outcomes of institutions on the propensity of politicians

⁷The broader issue—the politicization of political institutions—is far from a novel issue in Latin American politics (Chalmers 1977).

to strategize within institutions or about institutions. Testing such models would be a first step toward producing more valid estimates of the causal impact of institutions.

The Regime Question

A second, related limitation of the institutional literature on democratic politics concerns the criteria used in case selection (see Table 1). The problem is that the standard practice is to select cases not on the causal model's active variables—whether the independent or dependent variables—but on a background variable, usually defined as the existence of a democracy or stable democracy.⁸ Such a criterion of case selection requires scholars to address the complicated issue of what constitutes a democracy or a stable democracy, a matter different scholars resolve in different ways. The implications of multiple implicit and explicit definitions of democracy and stable democracy notwithstanding, the selection of cases that are stable democracies smuggles into the analysis two assumptions: (a) that democratic transitions and breakdowns are not related in a systematic manner to the variables in the causal model, and (b) that the democraticness and stability of regimes can be treated as constants. And these untested assumptions concerning core aspects of the regime question—the choice of procedures that regulate access to the decision-making centers within the state (Munck 2001, p. 213; Mazzuca 2002)—are problematic and have important methodological and substantive consequences.

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND BREAKDOWNS AS METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES The problem with the first assumption—that democratic transitions and breakdowns are unrelated to the variables in the causal model—is that much research has shown that the manner in which countries enter and exit the set of stable democracies is actually related to the variables of the general causal model used in the institutional literature. First, the institutions that constitute the initial conditions of the decision-making process by democratic authorities appear to be systematically linked to the process whereby transitions to democracy take place. More pointedly, research has posited that the choice of institutions is shaped by a range of factors, including the nature of the prior authoritarian regime (Haggard & Kaufman 1995, Linz & Stepan 1996, Shain & Linz 1995), the balance of power among political forces (Geddes 1995, 1996; Lijphart 1992; Przeworski 1991, pp. 79–88), and various societal factors, such as the cleavage structure (Lijphart 1977, ch. 3). Thus, counter to the common tendency to separate the study of the origins of institutions from the study of their consequences, this research suggests that factors affecting the choice of institutions constitute antecedent conditions, which should be considered as exogenous variables in the analysis of institutions. Proper

⁸The distinction between active and background variables is drawn from Valenzuela (1998, p. 253).

tests of the effects of institutions would thus have to endogenize institutions in this second way and treat factors seen as affecting the choice of democratic institutions as part of a causal chain.⁹

Second, the manner in which countries exit from the universe of democracies is also related in a nonrandom fashion to the variables in the general causal model that is used in institutional analysis. The most systematic evidence to this effect comes from research that points to the greater propensity to democratic breakdowns of presidential democracies (Przeworski et al. 2000, pp. 128–36). But a larger body of literature has linked both institutional arrangements and policy decisions to the breakdown of democracy (Collier & Collier 1991, Linz & Stepan 1978). Thus, so as to avoid selection bias, any effort to estimate the causal impact of institutions must address the effects of institutions and their outcomes on the likelihood that a country will remain a democracy. Again, this calls for complex causal models that address, via a feedback loop, the effect of democratic institutions and the decision making by democratic authorities on the likelihood that a country remains democratic—that is, models that endogenize democratic breakdowns.

THE DEMOCRATICNESS AND STABILITY OF THE REGIME AS SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS
The second assumption made in selecting cases—that the democraticness and stability of regimes can be treated as constants—is also problematic, though in a different way. These criteria of case selection imply that these issues are for all practical purposes resolved, that is, that the regimes in Latin America are both fully democratic and stable, and that democraticness and stability can justifiably be treated as mere background factors. But a quick glance at recent political developments in Latin America shows that these issues remain pressing substantive concerns.

The stability of the democratic regime has obviously been in play in a number of cases, and several instances of democratic breakdowns, or at least serious losses in the democraticness of the regime, have been recorded. Clear candidates include Fujimori's 1992 *auto-golpe* (self-coup) in Peru, Serrano's failed attempt to emulate Fujimori in Guatemala in 1993, the blatant recourse to electoral fraud in the Dominican Republic in 1994 and Peru in 2000, the crises in Paraguay in 1996 and 1999, and the short-lived coup in Venezuela in 2002. In addition, Latin America has experienced many political crises that do not entail the classic coup scenarios so common in the region's recent past but that nonetheless put the democratic regime at risk and frequently lead to significant backsliding. Moreover, it is important to note that democratic regimes have not been fully achieved. An obvious example is Chile's inability to eliminate its designated senators, that is, the senators who are not elected through a popular vote. But inasmuch as a democratic regime is seen as encompassing more than the existence of procedural minimums, such as inclusive, clean, and contested elections to fill the main government offices, the lack of fully democratic regimes in many other Latin American countries becomes apparent.

⁹A study that takes a step in this direction, by considering the impact of the old regime on the choice of institutions, is Cheibub & Przeworski (2003).

It may very well be that Latin America will avoid the kind of authoritarian regressions that placed the issue of democratic transitions, commonly understood as the crossing of a threshold marked by contested elections (O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986, ch. 6), at the center of the political agenda. But it is important to avoid the undue narrowing of research questions that is implied by a strict institutionalist approach to democracy. The old question about the conditions of democratic stability (Diamond et al. 1999; Linz & Valenzuela 1994; Mainwaring 2000; Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán 2003; Przeworski et al. 2000, ch. 2) has continued relevance, and research into processes that jeopardize the democratic regime—even if falling short of a classic coup (Kenney 2003, Pérez-Liñán 2003)—is central to the agenda of study of democratic politics. In turn, the democraticness of Latin American regimes is by no means a closed issue.

CAUSAL ASSUMPTIONS: A RECAPITULATION The impact of democratic institutions must be assessed through causal models that address both institutions and their context. Thus, rather than focusing only on institutions, it is necessary to build and test models that go well beyond the actors, institutions, and outcomes that are the centerpiece of an institutional approach. These suggestions do not add up to an invitation to drop institutions from the analysis. Indeed, the challenge is to develop theory in such a way that the grounded and nuanced depiction of the policy-making process that institutionalists have provided is linked to a sense of the broader political processes and, in particular, to the causal theories developed to address the larger regime question (Munck 1994, 2001). But the limitations of assumptions that are standard in institutional analysis must be recognized, and two broad conclusions must be drawn. First, until the kind of research that places institutions in context is conducted, the standard assertion that institutions matter must be treated as an assumption but not as a finding (Przeworski 2003). Second, moving beyond methodological issues that affect estimations of the causal impact of institutions, it is critical to note that the analysis of democratic institutions frequently plays down the continued relevance of the democraticness and stability of Latin American regimes. The virtues of an institutional approach discussed in the first section of this article must be weighed against the significant shortcomings associated with institutionalism's causal assumptions.

DESCRIPTIVE THEORIZING: THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

This article's final task, an assessment of the contributions made by the institutionalist literature to descriptive theorizing, is just as complicated as an assessment of this literature's contribution to causal theorizing. In this regard, institutionalists might be seen as focusing on narrowly defined problems, avoiding lengthy debates about how to conceptualize outcomes, getting right down to the task of measuring variables and moving rapidly to the testing of alternative hypotheses. Indeed,

such a characterization holds some truth. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to conclude that institutionalists are not making important contributions to ongoing efforts to theorize about the big question facing students of Latin America: How can we describe the way current Latin American democracies function? Efforts to address this question have been pioneered to a large extent by noninstitutionalists, who have developed a new literature on the quality of democracy (Diamond 1999; Hartlyn 2002; Kitschelt et al. 1999; Linz 1997; O'Donnell 1999b:Part IV, 2001, 2004). But the institutional literature offers insights that should be incorporated into the debate about the quality of democracy. Much as institutionalists have tended to ignore the contributions of the broader literature on democratization and democracy and would benefit from borrowing ideas from this literature, so too have theorists of democratic quality failed to appreciate the value of insights in the institutional literature and should seek to make use of them.

The literature on the quality of democracy has still not produced a clearly conceptualized statement of its research problem, let alone data that would allow for an empirical analysis of the problem. Thus, the following discussion is somewhat open-ended and tentative. It uses as an organizing principle two distinct relationships—between citizens and their representatives, and between citizens' representatives and policy administrators—and considers multiple potential formulations of the quality of democracy question. It casts a wide net, considering the political process in broad terms, and proceeds with deliberate caution, avoiding the temptation to prematurely close potential avenues of research. Yet it offers some specific pointers. First, this review discusses various ways in which institutionalists contribute to the formulation of this research problem and suggests some connections among the works of scholars who draw on different theoretical traditions. Second, it identifies some thorny issues, such as the relationship between politicians' preferences and state capacity, and some apparently irrelevant issues, such as the democraticness of the regime, that deserve further attention in the context of this debate.

Citizens and Their Representatives

The relationship between citizens and their representatives has been a central concern of the research on representation and accountability carried out by institutionalists.¹⁰ One strand of research focuses on the impact of institutions on the universalistic versus particularistic nature of policies (Cox & McCubbins 2001, pp. 47–52). This research has elaborated, and found empirical support for, the hypothesis that the more elections are candidate-centered (as opposed to party-centered), the less likely policies are to be universalistic (Ames 2001; Carey & Shugart 1995; Cox & McCubbins 2001, p. 49; Haggard & McCubbins 2001;

¹⁰Whereas the debate on policy decisiveness considered in the first half of this article focuses on government actors and is framed explicitly in terms of a contentless status quo (one that says nothing about the link between policy choices and citizens' interests), institutionalists bring citizens back in in their research on representation and accountability.

Mainwaring 1999, ch. 6; Shugart & Haggard 2001, pp. 85–88). Relatedly, the work of economists such as Persson & Tabellini (2000, 2003), using both sophisticated formal theory and empirical methods, has generated interesting results about the link between institutions and, among other things, the nature of public policies. They show that proportional electoral rules are more conducive than majoritarian rules to universalistic policies, measured in terms of social security and welfare spending, and that the impact of parliamentary as opposed to presidential systems is likewise positive but not very stable (Persson & Tabellini 2003, ch. 2, pp. 50, 142–48). Thus, institutionalists have shown how certain institutions are associated with policies that are understood as more or less representative of citizen interests.

This literature makes another, less optimistic point about accountability. One approach to the issue emphasizes that the design of electoral rules in particular generates a trade-off between representation, understood as the making of policies that reflect the interests of voters at large, and accountability, understood as the possibility that voters can identify and punish officials who are responsible for policy decisions (Persson & Tabellini 2003, pp. 18, 217; Powell 2000; Shugart & Carey 1992). Another approach frames the issue of accountability as a principal-agent relationship, with the electorate defined as principals and elected representatives as agents, and presents an even more negative view. Emphasizing the informational advantages enjoyed by elected authorities over voters, it stresses the inherent limitations of the vote as a means to control and hold elected officials accountable (Przeworski et al. 1999, chs. 1, 4; see also Stokes 2001). In other words, this literature offers a sobering view of accountability that hinges on factors that are inherent to the way democracies work and are not attributable to its failings. In the process, this literature identifies a problem that gives a clear content to the much-discussed yet poorly defined concept of the quality of democracy.

The identification of solutions to the problem of accountability, interestingly, is gradually being shaped by the contributions of scholars working within different theoretical traditions. One important line of thought focuses on the system of checks and balances (Persson et al. 1997, 2000; Przeworski et al. 1999, Part II), explicitly framing the relationship among elected officials in some cases as a second principal-agent relationship in a chain of principal-agent relationships (Cox & McCubbins 2001, pp. 21–22; Shugart et al. 2003). This research shows that such institutional arrangements have a direct impact on accountability by setting up a system in which different government branches can monitor and sanction each other. But it also posits an indirect effect—via a backward linkage—whereby the separation of powers could increase the public flow of information and thus help to correct the informational imbalances that weaken voters' prospects of controlling elected authorities.

Another line of thought converges with this one but takes an extra step. This parallel research focuses also on the prospects of controlling politicians through various institutions of what O'Donnell (1999a) labels "horizontal" accountability, in contrast to the standard "vertical" form of accountability exercised through the electoral process (Mainwaring & Welna 2003, Schedler et al. 1999). But, while it

emphasizes the potential gains that might be associated with institutions of horizontal accountability, it draws attention to the limits of these institutions and reaches back to the citizenry in a more encompassing way. This literature sees the function of checks and balances as hinging on a question of institutional design aimed at providing the appropriate degree of independence and overlapping powers of the various branches of government. But it also emphasizes that a key requirement for the exercise of horizontal accountability is the counterposition of political wills and hence the exclusion of the possibility of collusion among branches that are supposed to check each other (Przeworski 1999, p. 44; Przeworski et al. 1999, p. 19). And it considers various ways in which citizens might exercise control over politicians between elections. Thus, in this literature, the possibility of overcoming of the limitations of electoral accountability is seen as depending in part on institutions of horizontal accountability but also in part on the exercise of “societal” accountability, a concept that includes many types of activities and that therefore greatly expands the scope of analysis (Smulovitz & Peruzzotti 2000). Indeed, societal accountability is usually seen as entailing the continual monitoring and occasional sanctioning of politicians by citizens through a variety of channels other than the election of representatives—from street demonstrations to the exposure of public officials’ illegal behavior by journalists, the lodging of citizen complaints with the media or institutions such as ombudsman’s offices, and various mechanisms of direct democracy (Altman 2002; Smulovitz & Peruzzotti 2000, 2002).

The upshot of this rich debate deserves to be stated starkly. It is not clear whether the expansion of the notion of accountability resolves the trade-off between representation and accountability identified in the literature. Nonetheless, in pinpointing the limits of mechanisms of accountability centered exclusively on the electoral process, this debate has provided the theoretical foundation for an expansion of the notion of citizen’s political rights—an indisputable core of democratic theory—beyond those identified in the classic work of Marshall (1965) and enshrined in conventional definitions of a democratic political regime (Dahl 1971, pp. 3–7; 1989, chs. 8, 9). More specifically, it suggests that, so as to reflect current theories of accountability, political citizenship should be reconceptualized to include rights regarding the policy-making process that directly impinge on the relationships between citizens and their representatives, along with the traditional rights associated with the process through which governments are constituted, that is, those that are invoked in most definitions of the democratic regime.

Citizens’ Representatives and Administrators

Another relationship that is central to current debates about the quality of democracy is the one between elected representatives and policy administrators. Indeed, a full understanding of the question of the quality of democracy requires moving beyond policy making to policy implementation. Only then is it possible to assess whether the government rules for the people, as democratic theory argues it should, and to close the circle that starts with citizen preferences.

Two complementary perspectives on this issue offer some valuable leads. One view, advanced single-handedly by O'Donnell (1999b, ch. 7; 2001, 2004), draws attention to the fact that Latin American states do not uphold the rule of law but instead enforce the law in a truncated and biased manner. This work offers, among other things, a gripping description of the limitations of Latin American states in guaranteeing citizens' civil rights that helps to anchor the discussion and clarify the normative stakes. It also makes a strong case for seeing existing states as a major source of the problem and reformed states as a major part of the solution.

Another perspective, offered by authors such as Przeworski (1999, p. 32) and Cox & McCubbins (2001, pp. 21–22, 58–61), considers the challenge faced by elected representatives who seek to control the administrators in charge of implementing policies using a principal-agent framework (see also Shugart et al. 2003). Little empirical research has been done on Latin America using this framework (see, however, Huber & McCarthy 2003 and Eaton 2003). Moreover, even some of the most advanced research on the bureaucracy using a principal-agent framework in other regions can be seen as still focusing largely on policy making, considering the way in which legislation is written rather than the implementation of policies (see, e.g., Huber & Shipan 2002).¹¹ Nonetheless, by drawing attention to the fact that policy implementation hinges on yet one more principal-agent relationship and that citizens are not even a part of this link in the chain—indeed, the citizens stand at least two steps removed from the ultimate agent of state policy—this theoretical framework strongly hints at the difficulty of meeting the criterion of citizen control of the state that is called for by democratic theory.

These leads notwithstanding, this research agenda faces some daunting challenges. An attempt to understand the relationship between representatives and administrators must grapple with the complex interplay between politicians' preferences and their capacity to implement policy. Yet it is notoriously difficult to distinguish between two possible accounts of shortcomings related to the outcomes of decision making: (a) that politicians' preferences are in line with citizen interests but that politicians cannot guarantee citizens' civil rights owing to a lack of state capacity; or (b) that politicians actually do not intend to uphold the rule of law and invoke a lack of state capacity as a convenient cover to divert citizen attention away from their real preferences. Indeed, both interpretations are supported by evidence.

On the one hand, there is much support for the unflattering view of politicians as part of the problem and not part of the solution. Politicians depend on voters, for obvious electoral reasons. But they actually depend more on powerful actors, either private or ensconced in the state, that control economic resources and heavily affect politicians' ability to gain access to elected office and to pursue alternative careers. The standard line "*no se puede*" (it cannot be done)—justified on grounds of technical imperatives in some cases and of political limits imposed by the

¹¹Richard Snyder brought this limitation to my attention.

so called *poderes fácticos* (the powers that be) in other cases—could thus be an excuse aimed at papering over a conflict of interest between politicians and citizens. On the other hand, it would be irresponsible to disregard evidence that, when politicians have acted as agents of the citizenry and aggressively sought to implement certain policies, they have run into stiff resistance. Indeed, the specter of top-down ungovernability is quite real. And the lessons from Latin America's experience in the 1960s and 1970s, when attempts at reform unleashed a complex dynamic that eventually led to the breakdown of democracy in many countries, remain a critical point of reference. Further theorizing about this dimension of the quality of democracy is unlikely to make much progress until this thorny challenge of conceptualization and measurement is resolved.

This research agenda must also address the potential importance of a question that has generally been considered irrelevant to the debate about the quality of democracy: the democraticness of the regime. Much like the rest of the literature on democratic politics in Latin America, most research on the quality of democracy has taken as its point of departure the idea that problems regarding the political regime have been essentially solved and that the quality of democracy refers to a new set of political challenges, to postdemocratic transition issues. Yet such an assumption is questionable. Actors can and do oppose the rule of law by seeking to ensure that laws are not applied equally. Bribing bureaucrats, judges, or the police is an effective, and in many countries relatively cheap, way of doing so. But these are last-ditch efforts and, when the stakes are high, risky. Thus, it is quite reasonable to suspect that these actors will take precautionary steps and seek the issuance of discriminatory, or at least decidedly biased, legislation by shaping who gets elected to public office and/or how legislation is approved, through formal and/or informal procedures. Indeed, ample evidence exists that these strategies are common in present-day Latin America and that powerful actors who see the rule of law as hurting their interests seek to buy legislators and otherwise sever the relationship between citizens and their representatives, and even threaten and act against the most basic, electoral aspects of a democratic regime. In other words, there are good reasons to posit a negative backward linkage, whereby actors whose interests clash with the rule of law attempt to block the actions they oppose by going back in the chain of principal-agent relations linking citizens to representatives to policy administrators.¹²

¹²Relevant research on Latin America includes the work on formal electoral rules that skew the value of the vote and introduce a disjuncture between electoral preferences and governing coalitions (Snyder & Samuels 2001). On the role of money in electoral politics, see Payne et al. (2002, ch. 7) and Zovatto (2003). On informal procedures, see O'Donnell (1999b, ch. 9) and Helmke & Levitsky (2003). Overall, however, we lack good studies that go beyond the means whereby the election of representatives is distorted and that get inside the policy-making process, as is done in the U.S. literature on the formation of iron triangles, which shows how legislative committee members, executive agencies, and interest groups working in concert can override the interest of the citizenry and legislators.

In tackling these challenges and seeking to advance this research agenda, as is suggested, it is useful to think in terms of a multilink chain that goes from citizens to policy makers to policy administrators, and to consider how powerful actors who have an interest in rupturing this chain might act. This perspective offers a way to frame the question of the quality of democracy as hinging, broadly speaking, on the issue of citizen control of the state, yet to break down the research agenda into distinct, though connected, parts. Thus, it avoids a somewhat awkward separation between the analysis of the democratic regime, understood as focusing on the procedures for gaining access to the government and hence a critical aspect of the relationship between citizens and their representatives, and the rule of law, understood as entailing both the enactment and implementation of laws that treat all citizens as equals. Instead, it invites a rethinking of the political regime, aimed at revising the commonly used minimalist conception of a democratic regime, and focuses attention on the link between the democratic regime and the rule of law.¹³ Moreover, it opens the door to new theorizing about the conditions of equilibrium, and the possibilities of change, of this more broadly conceived system. The questions this analysis suggests are whether the citizens of Latin America might be able to use their vote as an instrument to make badly needed gains with regard to accountability and the rule of law, or whether deficiencies in the areas of accountability and the rule of law are actually matched and reinforced by deficiencies regarding the democratic regime and, thus, that the system is currently in equilibrium and not prone to change. These, however, are empirical questions, and as yet they have not been researched in a systematic manner.¹⁴

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This article has offered an overview of new debates and research frontiers in the study of democratic politics in Latin America. It began by discussing an important debate in the institutional literature, about the impact of executive-legislative relations on the problem of indecisiveness. Taking the institutional literature on its own terms, this discussion highlighted the notable strengths of this literature. Subsequently, I adopted a broader perspective that exposed some limitations but also other strengths of institutional analyses, and I considered the possibility of combining insights developed from institutional and alternative theoretical perspectives. The discussion was organized around the two core elements of theory building—causal and descriptive theorizing—and yielded some conclusions that

¹³O'Donnell (2001, 2004) suggests that the link between the democratic regime and the rule of law is such that it provides the theoretical justification for an expanded concept of democracy that goes beyond the regime and encompasses the rule of law.

¹⁴Munck (2003, pp. 575–83) offers some admittedly sketchy and speculative thoughts along these lines.

have wide-ranging implications for the manner in which Latin American politics should be studied.

With regard to causal theorizing, I considered some important limitations of institutional analysis associated with the way institutions are theorized and cases are selected. These shortcomings are remediable through the construction of more complex causal models that include variables that go well beyond the actors, institutions, and outcomes that are the centerpiece of an institutional approach. Yet the consequences of these shortcomings for existing research cannot be disregarded. Indeed, it is crucial to take the standard assertion that “institutions matter” as little more than a metatheoretical statement, not a conclusion of empirical testing. To test this proposition, it is essential not to focus exclusively on institutions and to consider the possibility that actors engaged in conflicts are, at the very least, unlikely to place a respect for formal institutions ahead of a defense of their own interests. In addition, it is important to recognize that the common delinking of the analysis of democratic institutions from the regime question is problematic not only for methodological reasons but also for substantive ones. In this regard, and especially in the context of Latin America, it is imperative that researchers not become desensitized to the manner in which the democraticness and stability of regimes are still in play.

With regard to descriptive theorizing, the assessment was more positive. Much institutional research is narrowly focused on the policy-making process from the perspective of decision makers. But institutionalists have also focused on the political process in broader terms and have made some significant and undervalued contributions to theorizing about the quality of democracy, a critical substantive concern in the field of Latin American politics. Thus, breaking with current divisions in the field, I suggested ways in which the question of democratic quality might be framed by explicitly connecting the complementary perspectives offered by scholars working in different theoretical traditions. The possible gains associated with this strategy notwithstanding, I also suggested that this agenda of research faces some major challenges. One concerns the thorny relationship between politicians’ preferences and state capacity. Another relates to the relationship between the democraticness of the regime and the rule of law.

Research on democratic politics in Latin America has advanced considerably in the years since this region moved away from authoritarian rule in the late 1970s. As this article has sought to show, this research has also opened up vast frontiers, which offer important opportunities for new scholarship. The issues at stake are not only of academic interest. Indeed, questions such as the quality of democracy are increasingly moving to the center of political attention in the region. Thus, it is a matter of some urgency that scholars turn their attention to these questions and, drawing on all their theoretical and methodological skills, produce knowledge that is accessible and readily translatable into political advice. This is a big challenge. It is also the reason why the study of Latin American democratic politics is exciting and rewarding.

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DIRECT DEMOCRACY: New Approaches to Old Questions

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■ **Abstract** Until recently, direct democracy scholarship was primarily descriptive or normative. Much of it sought to highlight the processes' shortcomings. We describe new research that examines direct democracy from a more scientific perspective. We organize the discussion around four "old" questions that have long been at the heart of the direct democracy debate: Are voters competent? What role does money play? How does direct democracy affect policy? Does direct democracy benefit the many or the few? We find that recent breakthroughs in theory and empirical analysis paint a comparatively positive picture of the initiative and referendum. For example, voters are more competent, and the relationship between money and power in direct democracy is less nefarious, than many observers allege. More new studies show that the mere presence of direct democracy induces sitting legislatures to govern more effectively.

INTRODUCTION

For better or worse, the institutions of direct democracy—initiative and referendum—have become an integral part of American democracy. At present, more than half of the states and cities in the United States provide for the initiative and referendum, and more than 70% of the population lives in a state or city where direct democracy is available (Matsusaka 2004). These institutions have been a part of American government for more than 100 years now, making them older than universal women's suffrage and direct election of U.S. senators, and there is reason to believe that they will become increasingly important in the future. No state with the initiative or referendum has ever chosen to do away with the procedure, and states without the procedures are gradually adopting them (at a rate of about one state per decade since the end of World War II).

Direct democracy is flourishing outside the United States as well. In Western Europe, ten countries allow initiatives (as do six of the post-Soviet states), most

countries use referendums¹ from time to time, and the proposed constitution for the European Union now includes a provision for initiative and referendum. It has become almost the norm to use referendums to make important public decisions; 29 elections have been held on European integration alone (see, e.g., Hug & Sciarini 2000, Hug 2002).

Despite its rise, however, direct democracy remains controversial. Most citizens like it—American and European surveys consistently reveal strong support for direct democracy. Many journalists and political elites, on the other hand, are deeply skeptical. Their main points of contention are almost proverbial: Are voters competent to make policy decisions? Is money too important in initiative campaigns? Does direct democracy allow special interests to subvert the policy process, or does it empower citizens to counteract special interest influence in the legislature? These questions were at the heart of the debate over direct democracy during the Progressive movement a century ago, and they remain the central questions today.

Scholars also address these questions. In fact, they have written hundreds of books and thousands of articles about direct democracy. Until recently, however, this literature was almost entirely descriptive or normative. Few scholars treated the questions as scientific propositions that could be evaluated theoretically and tested empirically. The historical obstacles to examining direct democracy scientifically have been the lack of formal language to filter competing arguments by their logical consistency and a high cost of computing that impeded all but the simplest empirical inquiries. In recent decades, these obstacles have eroded. The increasing sophistication of econometrics and the advent of low-cost computing make it possible to work with large data sets, isolate key effects, and establish robust empirical relations. At the same time, the development of powerful new theoretical tools, including formal modeling, allows more sophisticated examinations of direct democracy's strategic, informational, and policy-related aspects.

In this essay, we discuss the research engendered by the fortuitous confluence of breakthroughs in theory and empirical analysis. After a brief review of definitions and concepts in the next section, we focus on four “old” questions that have long been at the heart of the direct democracy debate:

- Are voters competent?
- What role does money play?
- How does direct democracy affect policy?
- Does direct democracy benefit the many or the few?

We address each question in two ways. First, we highlight the methodological foundations of the new studies in order to distinguish their approach from the largely descriptive and normative literature that preceded them. Second, we discuss the new literature's substantive findings.

¹We use “referendums” rather than “referenda” as the plural following the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the convention of the literature.

Although it is too early to draw definitive conclusions about all aspects of direct democracy, the new approaches challenge many old answers. The new insights paint a relatively positive picture of the initiative and referendum. They show that voters are more competent than many critics allege and that the relationship between money and power in direct democracy is far less nefarious than many “prescientific” authors contend. In other words, the new approaches’ results are more in line with the preponderance of public opinion than they are with the negative valence of many previous writings.

DEFINITIONS AND CHALLENGES

Our focus here is on new approaches to old questions about direct democracy, so we do not dwell on legal and institutional details except where they are important to answering the questions. However, it is useful to define a few terms and provide a little institutional context before proceeding. Direct democracy is a broad term that encompasses a variety of decision processes, including town meetings, recall elections, initiatives, and various forms of referendums. This essay focuses on the two most important and widely used processes, the initiative and referendum.²

The referendum is a process that allows citizens to approve or reject laws or constitutional amendments proposed by the government. Referendums come in several flavors. Petition referendums allow citizens to challenge laws approved by the legislature. Legislative referendums are measures referred to the voters by the legislature for their approval. Some legislative referendums are mandatory. Forty-nine states, for example, require that voters approve constitutional amendments. Other legislative referendums are less binding. At the extreme are advisory referendums. Governments use these referendums to gauge public opinion, but the outcomes of such elections have no direct implications for law or policy.

The initiative is a process that allows ordinary citizens to propose new laws or constitutional amendments by petition. The main difference between initiatives and referendums, therefore, is that citizens can write the former whereas only government officials can draft the latter. Some of the most famous recent uses of direct democracy, such as California’s Proposition 13 of 1978, were citizen-sponsored initiatives that became law despite broad opposition in sitting legislatures. Figure 1 indicates which states currently provide for the initiative and referendum.

²The single most comprehensive source on the law and use of the initiative and referendum in America is the *Initiative and Referendum Almanac* (Waters 2003). Information on direct democracy in the states also can be found in Magleby (1984), Dubois & Feeny (1998), Matsusaka (2004), and the Web site of the Initiative & Referendum Institute (<http://www.iandrinstute.org>). Information on direct democracy in cities can be found in Schmidt (1989) and Matsusaka (2003). European information is reported on the Web site of the Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe (<http://www.iri-europe.org>).

Campaigning

For many groups using direct democracy, the need to wage an electoral campaign in support of a policy proposal represents an even greater challenge than qualification. Numerous factors affect the cost of an initiative campaign. In many cases, reaching large segments of the population requires sizable purchases of advertisement time on television and radio. Many campaigns also engage heavily in direct mail. Other factors that affect the cost of waging a successful direct democracy campaign include the extent of underlying public support (i.e., whether the campaign seeks to mobilize existing support or change people's opinions; the latter is often more expensive) and the resources of the opposition (i.e., whether the campaign is competitive). When advocates run expensive campaigns, then those without resources may be increasingly disadvantaged.

Implementation

If an initiative or referendum wins on Election Day, its impact on policy depends on how it is implemented. In some cases, implementation is easy (e.g., term-limits legislation often provides simple rules, such as a maximum of three two-year terms). In most cases, however, new laws require more complex interpretation and more complicated actions. Some initiatives, for example, offer vague implementation directions and mandate mild or no sanctions on those who choose not to follow existing directions. Policies passed by direct democracy are not always implemented as written and do not always affect policy in ways that their supporters anticipate (Gerber et al. 2001). Therefore, understanding when initiatives and referendums are most likely to be implemented as they were written is an important part of understanding direct democracy's ultimate policy impact.

With basic definitions and concepts in hand, we now turn to the task of describing what new approaches to the study of direct democracy imply about its old questions. We start with an important question about voters.

ARE VOTERS COMPETENT?

Questions about voter competence are a common facet of direct democracy debates. Many people believe that ordinary citizens are incompetent because they base their political choices on limited factual foundations. Supporting this point of view are answers to what pollsters call "political information" questions (e.g., "Who is the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?"). Citizens routinely provide incorrect answers to such questions on national surveys (Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996).

With such evidence abundant and widely publicized, it is difficult to imagine that voters are competent to make the kinds of policy decisions with which direct democracy confronts them. Yet, a frequent finding in new studies of direct democracy is that they do. To say that citizens are more competent than many critics allege is not to say that instances of voter incompetence are trivial or nonexistent.

However, techniques such as game theoretic communication models, laboratory experiments, and specially designed surveys now allow scholars to more accurately distinguish malignant informational contexts from benign ones.

The key insight on which this literature builds is that people base most of their choices, even complex and important ones, on very simple kinds of information. Making choices in this way leaves us vulnerable to mistakes, but we proceed in this fashion because we have no other option. Each of us has thousands of choices to make every day. We cannot know detailed information about, or conduct rigorous research on, the consequences of every choice we face. Because we cannot know everything, our choices are—as a matter of necessity—based on the few rules of thumb or heuristics that we adopt.

In one of the first direct empirical examinations of this phenomenon, Lupia (1994) demonstrated that voters can use simple pieces of information as substitutes for the detailed information that political surveys show them to lack. His findings are the result of an exit poll whose purpose was to determine whether relatively uninformed voters could use information shortcuts—specifically the identity of groups who supported or opposed the measures in question—to cast the same votes they would have cast if able to recite the ballot measures' details. The exit poll surveyed California voters who were confronted by five complex propositions regarding the regulation of the insurance industry. Three of the propositions had been placed on the ballot by the insurance industry, the other two by trial lawyers and consumer activists, respectively. Pollsters asked respondents how they voted on the propositions, some socioeconomic and insurance rate-related questions, and a series of questions about the propositions. These latter questions were intended to learn not only what respondents knew about the details of the insurance-reform debate but also to gauge respondent beliefs about the preferences of persons or groups who took public stands on the initiatives.

The data showed respondents sorting themselves into three categories. The first category contained voters who knew neither the answers to the detailed questions about the propositions nor the insurance industry's preferences. The second category contained "model citizens"—voters who consistently gave correct answers to detailed questions about the initiatives and who knew the insurance industry's preferences. The third category contained respondents who could not answer questions about the propositions' details but, like the model citizens, knew the insurance industry's preferences.

The study's central finding is that voters in the second and third categories voted in very similar ways, whereas voters in the first category voted quite differently. Voters in the third category voted as if they were model citizens. Such evidence supports the claim that voters with apparently low levels of political information can use information shortcuts to emulate the voting behavior they would have exhibited if they were as informed as the best-informed persons in the survey.

In a more expansive empirical analysis, spanning many states and elections, Bowler & Donovan (1998, p. 168) reveal that although voters are not "fully informed" about the details of most of the initiatives and referendums on which

they vote, many of these voters “appear able to figure out what they are for and against in ways that make sense in terms of their underlying values and interests. Failing that, others appear to use a strategy of voting *no* when information is lacking or when worries about general state conditions are greatest. Just as legislators do, these voters make choices purposefully, using available information.”

No scholar working in this area regards information shortcuts, such as interest group endorsements, as a panacea for the potential problems that limited information can cause for direct democracy. Results such as those offered above, however, suggest that voters are more competent than commonly portrayed. The lingering question is “When are such voters competent?”

New theoretical research (e.g., Lupia & McCubbins 1998) examines conditions under which voters who use information shortcuts cast the same votes they would have cast if they were better informed. These models draw from social psychological research on persuasion (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken 1993, Petty & Cacioppo 1986) and economic models of strategic communication (see, e.g., Farrell & Gibbons 1989, Farrell & Rabin 1996, Milgrom & Roberts 1986). This kind of research begins with the premise that a voter may lack the information she needs to vote competently. Although relying on others for information often requires less of the voter’s time and effort than does conducting her own investigation of the issues at hand, such dependence can also entail substantial peril. Not all people from whom voters can seek advice are trustworthy or knowledgeable.

Theoretical models built from such premises (Lupia & McCubbins 1998, Ch. 3–5) and associated laboratory experiments (Lupia & McCubbins 1998, Ch. 6–8) show that voters need not know many details of a ballot measure in order to vote as if they did. If voters have access to reliable advisers, then they can vote competently despite not knowing many details about the choice at hand. Indeed, voters have an incentive to seek advice from people who are credible and to avoid information providers who provide vague or misleading reports. But how do they do this? Theory shows that political institutions can do some of the work for them. If these institutions generate the forces that clarify others’ incentives in the eyes of voters (e.g., truth-in-advertising laws, perjury penalties, or incentives to be known as trustworthy, each of which can minimize the range of false statements made about a particular initiative), then voters can do a much better job of choosing good advisers. Therefore, voters can be competent while lacking information about those who provide them with information. Seen in this light, the requirements for voter competence in direct democracy can be quite minimal.

As Lupia & Johnston (2001) argue, it may also be true that politics encounter issues for which experts are themselves not well informed. In this case, there are two possible scenarios. In the first scenario, no one in the polity is sufficiently well informed. In such a case, letting the voters choose policy by direct democracy rather than leaving it to the legislature causes no loss in competence. In the second scenario, some elites are knowledgeable, but the electorate’s experts are not. This scenario can occur in a closed society, where the channels of communication are centrally controlled, or in a society where effective channels of communication

do not exist. In such a situation, letting voters make policy by direct democracy can do considerable damage. European and North American states, however, are not closed societies. Each has access to modern forms of communication and competitive political environments. Therefore, if someone in a direct democracy debate has the opportunity to expose the opposing side's weaknesses, the competitive nature of politics provides a strong incentive to do so publicly. In such cases, it is possible, but unlikely, that competing elites will conspire to withhold important information from potential supporters in the electorate. In sum, if there are people who are willing to inform voters and if voters can use environmental factors such as institutions to better understand the motives of the people they listen to, then voters can cast the same votes they would have cast if more informed.

Research specifically devoted to questions of voter competence in direct democracy is a relatively new phenomenon, but much of the theory and evidence produced by political scientists so far reveal that common stereotypes about voter incompetence rely on shaky theoretical and empirical foundations.

WHAT ROLE DOES MONEY PLAY?

Contemporary discussions of American democracy are preoccupied with the role of money. When it comes to elected representatives, the main concern is that campaign contributions lead to corruption and cause officials to adopt policies favored by contributors but contrary to the public interest. Corruption is a less significant concern with the initiative and referendum because voters only approve or reject a specific law; they do not place an official in a position to dispense favors to contributors. So when it comes to direct democracy, the concern is that wealthy interests "buy" legislation directly by placing measures on the ballot and campaigning for their approval. However, many new studies suggest that whatever the capacity of money to influence ballot proposition elections, it does not give narrow special interests any greater advantage than they already enjoy in the legislature, at least with regard to fiscal policy or the social policies that have been studied.

There have been numerous attempts to measure the effect of money on ballot proposition elections. The earliest studies (e.g., Lowenstein 1982; Magleby 1984, Ch. 8; Owens & Wade 1986) compared passage rates for small samples of initiatives in which one side heavily outspent the other to passage rates where spending was about equal. The general finding was that heavy spending against a measure tended to lead to the measure's defeat, whereas heavy spending in favor of a measure had a minimal effect.

That basic finding has held up well in studies using more sophisticated techniques (Garrett & Gerber 2001). For example, Gerber (1999) estimated regressions for a sample of 125 propositions in eight states to measure the effect of spending for and against a measure on the measure's success, controlling for the type

of spending and other variables. She found that spending against a measure had a large and statistically significant negative effect on the probability of passage, whereas spending in favor had a small and insignificant effect.

Gerber's empirical analysis is motivated by a model of interest-group behavior based on optimization principles from economic theory. She observes that different groups have different resources available to influence policy (e.g., citizen groups may have access to more volunteer labor, whereas business groups have more cash), and their efforts have different productivities (e.g., business groups may find it difficult to persuade voters if their motives are more suspect than those of certain citizen groups). As a result, campaign spending by some groups is likely to be more effective than spending by other groups. Consistent with this idea, Gerber finds that spending by business groups is particularly ineffective in gaining approval for measures but is particularly potent in defeating measures. In contrast, spending by citizen groups appears more effective in passing measures (Gerber defines citizen groups to include unions and other noncorporate public interest groups).

Such studies imply a role for money in direct democracy that cuts against popular stereotypes. Consider, for example, the implications of the role that money plays in groups' abilities to satisfy states' signature requirements. A fact beyond dispute is that qualifying a measure for the ballot can be expensive. Using paid signature gatherers to qualify an initiative in California, for example, now costs well over \$1 million. Professional signature collectors have always been a part of the initiative process (Magleby 1984, Ch. 4), but they are becoming nearly indispensable in many states. A popular stereotype is that the growing role of paid signature gatherers allows wealthy interests greater advantages in buying policy. Gerber's research shows that the stereotype is not quite right. Business groups regularly fail to pass the initiatives they sponsor. However, Gerber also finds that the ability to get on the ballot helps them in other ways. It can trigger a legislative response to stave off the initiative, and even if the measure fails, it may attract enough votes to signal the existence of a large constituency that might prompt the legislature to take some action on the issue—though these outcomes are likely only if the policy in question has substantial public support. Indeed, a survey of business groups reported by Gerber (1999) reveals that their primary reason for promoting initiatives is to send a signal to the legislature, not to achieve passage of the measure.

New studies of voter decision making in direct democracy also reinforce Lowenstein's (1982) and Magleby's (1984) early results. As noted above, Bowler & Donovan (1998) show that when voters are uncertain about the likely policy consequences of a ballot proposition, they tend to vote against it. Voters prefer to stick with policies whose consequences they have experienced, namely the policies that continue when initiatives lose, rather than risk voting for a new initiative whose consequences might be very bad. Thus, spending vast sums of money to defeat an initiative may make voters sufficiently confused and uncertain that they vote against it. Convincing voters that an initiative represents an improvement over the

known status quo, by contrast, requires more than money. As Lupia (1994), Gerber (1999), and Lupia & Johnston (2001) show, it also requires the endorsements of well-known public figures and evidence of broad grass-roots support.

There are two upshots of these considerations. First, the deep pockets of business groups do not allow them to “buy” favorable policy, but they do provide leverage in fighting off measures the groups oppose. Second, citizen groups do appear to be able to use their wealth to gain approval for measures. Thus, it seems that money matters, but in a nuanced way. The spending evidence also suggests why the initiative process does not lead to policies contrary to the wishes of the majority (see below): Without preexisting public support, the financial resources of business groups are ineffective in changing the status quo, and the financial resources of most citizen groups are too scarce to bring about much change.

HOW DOES DIRECT DEMOCRACY AFFECT POLICY?

Policies and Performance

The most important question that might be asked about direct democracy is whether it affects public policy—and, if so, how? If direct democracy does not affect policy outcomes, then questions about factors such as voter competence and the power of money lose much of their relevance. A tricky issue in answering this crucial question is how to measure the effect of an initiative or referendum on policy. The earlier descriptive and normative literatures approached the issue by studying the content of measures that were actually approved by the voters and making a judgment call on their importance. Such an approach relies on several assumptions that are not generally valid, among them that (a) direct democracy affects policy only through the passage of measures, (b) policies brought about by the initiative would not have come about otherwise, and (c) measures approved by the voters are actually implemented.

Game theory has been instrumental in clarifying how to measure the impact of direct democracy on policy. The key insight is that the institutions of direct democracy can affect policy even if they are never used. Intuitively, the threat of an initiative by an interest group may be enough to induce a change in behavior of the legislature. The legislature, for example, may partially accommodate an interest group to stave off an initiative it considers to be even worse. If the legislature responds to a threat by altering its policy choice, then the initiative has changed the policy outcome even though a measure never appeared on the ballot. The most transparent development of this idea is that of Gerber (1996), who builds on the agenda-setter model pioneered by Romer & Rosenthal (1979). Gerber (1998) shows that the possibility is more than theoretical by discussing real cases in which the threat of an initiative did engender a legislative response. In short, the initiative has both a direct effect (measures approved by the voters) and an indirect effect (changes in legislative behavior), so its effect on policy cannot be measured by examining only the propositions that actually pass.

Theory implies that the mere availability of direct democracy can affect policy. A growing body of empirical work tests this claim directly. Some scholars use panel data for American states and cities and Swiss cantons and local governments. They then compare policy outcomes in states with and without the initiative process. A common approach is to regress a policy variable on a set of control variables and a dummy variable that equals 1 for states with the initiative process. If policy differences remain after controlling for other known determinants of policy outcomes, such as demographics and political variables, the differences are ascribed to the availability of the initiative process.

Such studies generally find that the initiative and referendum matter across a wide range of policies. Matsusaka (1995, 2000, 2004) and Matsusaka & McCarty (2001) find differences in tax and spending policies in American states and cities. Feld & Matsusaka (2004) and Schaltegger & Feld (2001) find differences in tax and spending policies among Swiss cantons and municipalities. Gerber (1996, 1999) finds differences in parental abortion notification and capital punishment policies, and Gerber & Hug (2002) find differences in minority rights policies across American states. Moreover, and again consistent with the theory described above, the studies generally find that the policy impact of initiative and referendum processes in states diminishes as the cost of using the devices rises (e.g., as the signature requirement increases).

Beyond observing that direct democracy matters, it is interesting to know *how* it matters. For example, does it tend to bring about conservative or liberal policies? When the initiative was first proposed by the Progressives early in the twentieth century, it was opposed by conservatives on the grounds that it would become the tool of socialists and other left-leaning groups: "If socialism is ever established in the United States—so far as it can be established—it will be through the initiative and referendum" (Boyle 1912, p. 29). More recently, the initiative has been associated with conservative causes, especially tax limitation. The older descriptive literature searched for ideological tendencies in direct legislation by subjectively classifying measures and then counting up the number of conservative and liberal measures that passed. The results were generally ambiguous (Cronin 1989). As discussed above, the counting-up approach is not generally valid because it ignores the indirect effects of initiatives and referendums. It also assumes that the measures are faithfully implemented—an assumption to which we return below.

The new research, which is based on theoretically justified estimates of the full effects (direct plus indirect), provides a fairly clear picture of the ideological tendency of the initiative and referendum. For fiscal policies over the past several decades, the evidence points almost uniformly to a conservative effect of the initiative (see Matsusaka 2004 for evidence and a review of the literature). Initiative states taxed and spent about 4% less than noninitiative states (all else equal), adopted less redistributive financing schemes (relying more on user charges and fees and less on broad-based taxes), and decentralized expenditure from state to local governments. Similarly, evidence from Swiss cantons shows that the initiative and referendum reduce spending (Feld & Matsusaka 2004, Schaltegger &

Feld 2001). For social policies, Gerber (1999) finds that initiative states are more likely to require parental notification when minors seek abortions and are more likely to use capital punishment. It is easy to find examples of particular initiatives that promote liberal causes, such as funding for mass transit, but the statistical evidence shows that these are isolated cases that run against a more general trend: Over the past four decades, the initiative has tended to bring about more fiscally and socially conservative policies at the state level than would occur otherwise.

The reverse was true earlier in the twentieth century. Matsusaka (2000) documents that the initiative increased state spending during the period 1902–1942, particularly spending on public education and welfare programs. The initiative also appears to have driven up spending in cities over the past few decades (Matsusaka 2004). Thus, it would be wrong to conclude that direct democracy is inherently conservative. Rather than thinking of direct democracy as ideologically predisposed in a particular direction, it is better to think of it as a “median-reverting” institution that pushes policy back toward the center of public opinion when legislatures move too far to the right or left.

A more common question is whether the initiative and referendum lead to better or worse policy decisions. Although many people offer opinions on this matter, their conclusions usually tell us more about their own policy preferences than about the desirability of the resulting policies as seen from broader or different normative perspectives. Of course, it is difficult to come up with an objective definition of a good or bad policy, and the new research, with its positive focus, has tended to shy away from normative assessments of the institutions of direct democracy. Yet some interesting steps in this direction have been taken.

One criticism of direct democracy is that voters are myopic: They will approve new spending programs while at the same time cutting their taxes. The evidence generally rejects the notion that voters do not understand that budgets must balance over time. Although initiatives tend to bring about both lower taxes and lower spending, neither initiatives nor referendums have a significant effect on the amount of debt issued (Matsusaka 1995, 2004; Kiewiet & Szakaly 1996). At least in this respect, the initiative process does not lead to *prima facie* irrational public policies—particularly when you compare such results to the deficit spending patterns of many professional legislatures.

A scattering of studies has attempted to measure the quality of public decisions using economic indicia. These studies face the familiar problems associated with nonexperimental data, and the techniques to resolve those problems are still being developed, so the findings should be viewed as preliminary. An early study by Pommerehne (1983) found that municipal services such as trash collection are more efficient (output for a given level of expenditure) in cities with direct democracy than in cities without direct democracy. Feld & Savioz (1997) estimate an aggregate production function for the economies of Swiss cantons and find that those with direct democracy enjoy a higher total output for a given level of labor and capital inputs than those without. One explanation could be that direct democracy cantons are using their public funds more productively than cantons

without direct democracy. Blomberg et al. (2001) also adopt a macroeconomic approach and find that American states with the initiative experience faster growth in output per capita than those without. They also suggest that public spending is less wasteful in states with the initiative than in those without. Frey & Stutzer (2000) approach a similar question in a different way. They study survey data in which people indicate their “happiness” (subjective well being) and find happier people in cantons with more direct democracy, after controlling for income and other demographics.

Other potential benefits of direct democracy have been highlighted recently. Mendelsohn & Cutler (2000), in a study of a Canadian referendum, find that voters pay more attention to the media and learn more as campaigns progress, even among the most poorly informed segments of the electorate. Tolbert and her coauthors (2003, p. 23) use 1996, 1998, and 2000 American National Election Studies to show that “exposure to ballot initiatives increases the probability of voting, stimulates campaign contributions to interest groups, and enhances political knowledge.” Again, each of these studies should be viewed with some caution because they use data from specific contexts, but they do lay down a few tracks toward measuring the quality of public policies under direct democracy. It seems worth noting that every such study to date points to higher-quality (or no worse) decisions when the institutions of direct democracy are available.

The Implementation Problem

The literature documenting that direct democracy changes policy is complemented by another strand of research that investigates the channels through which the policy changes occur. New research integrates delegation models, econometric analyses, and case studies to clarify what happens in direct democracy’s implementation stage. It shows that implementation is a particularly thorny issue for initiatives.

The focal empirical result is that great variation exists in how legislators, bureaucrats, and other government employees react to winning initiatives. Some measures, once passed, take full effect, whereas others are reinterpreted or ignored (Gerber et al. 2001). These variations occur because the people who create and support winning initiatives are not authorized to implement and enforce them. Instead, they must delegate these tasks to legislatures and bureaucrats.

New research (see, e.g., Gerber et al. 2001, Bali 2003, Gerber et al. 2004) addresses the question, “When will these governmental actors use their delegated powers to weaken the impact of laws they dislike?” It reveals that initiatives face more difficult implementation problems than many policies passed by professional legislatures. The initiative process is a very expensive way to seek policy change; it is cost effective only for people who seek policy changes that the government refuses to provide (Gerber 1999). It is not surprising, therefore, that many initiatives propose policy changes that reflect dramatic departures from the status quo (e.g., overhauling a state’s property tax system), that legislators are unwilling to impose on themselves (e.g., term limits and certain types of campaign finance reform), that

the major parties dislike (e.g., open primaries), that cut across existing political cleavages (e.g., bilingual education), that offend important legislative constituencies (e.g., tort reform), or that are considered too hot to handle (e.g., immigration policy and gay marriage).

The challenge for supporters of such initiatives, a challenge that many laws passed by legislative majorities do not face, is that the same governmental actors who once blocked the policies from proceeding through traditional legislative channels may be in a position to influence, or even determine, the extent of their postelection implementation and enforcement. In other words, laws passed by voters against the wishes of legislative majorities or governors face powerful postpassage opposition that laws passed by these government entities do not.

Moreover, when a professional legislature passes a law, rarely is its next move to disband. Although some legislatures pass laws just before a new batch of legislators is sworn in, the legislative body itself continues. Therefore, it is in a relatively good position to oversee those charged with implementing its edicts. Organizations that pass initiatives, by contrast, often disband soon after the election. They cease raising money, they cease recruiting supporters, they shut down their offices—they cease to exist. Compared with professional legislatures, such entities are in a relatively bad position to oversee those charged with implementing their edicts.

A game theoretic model that builds in these postelection features of the initiative process shows that the policy changes that are most likely to prevail as initiatives (as opposed to prevailing in a standing legislature) are less likely to be implemented and enforced, all else staying constant (Gerber et al. 2004). This result is important because many public and scholarly observers of the initiative process believe that a victory at the polls implies a direct policy change. The new research turns this common wisdom on its head. Much of what is important to understanding the initiative process's policy consequences occurs after Election Day.

DOES DIRECT DEMOCRACY BENEFIT THE MANY OR THE FEW?

The Progressives promoted the initiative and referendum as ways to counteract special interest influence in state legislatures. One of the most prominent criticisms of these processes, then and now, is that they actually have the reverse affect: They allow wealthy, organized interests to subvert the policy process (e.g., Broder 2000). The evidence in support of the subversion criticism is largely circumstantial. Special interests are active in qualifying measures for the ballot and in campaigning for their approval. It is expensive to collect the signatures required to place a measure on the ballot (more than \$1 million in California), making it difficult for groups without access to significant resources to make proposals.

However, the circumstantial argument rests on assumptions that are not generally consistent with evolving theory. For one thing, the dominance of the proposal process by narrow groups does not imply the process works to the disadvantage

of a majority of citizens. In the agenda-setting models of Gerber (1996) and Matsusaka & McCarty (2001), only policies favored by the majority will be approved if they come to the ballot. If voters are sufficiently well informed, they will reject any policies that they find worse than the status quo. In such cases, voters are always better (or no worse) off having an initiative or referendum available, even in the extreme case where proposals are entirely monopolized by special interests. Intuitively, the voters are better off if the interest group offers a proposal that the voters prefer to the status quo provided by the legislature, and they are no worse off if the interest group offers an inferior policy because they will simply reject it. Put differently, a majority of voters can gain when they have the opportunity to choose between two policy options instead of having to accept the decision of the legislature.

The conclusion that the majority is always better off having the initiative and referendum available is a fairly general property of complete information models but does not necessarily hold with incomplete information. For example, Matsusaka & McCarty (2001) show that when the legislature is uncertain about the preferences of the majority of voters, the voters might be worse off having the initiative available because the legislature will cater to special interests in an effort to avoid the risk of an initiative campaign. Similarly, Gerber & Lupia (1995) show that when voters are uncertain about the policy implications of a referendum and are also unwilling or unable to seek the advice of credible experts, then direct democracy can produce policy outcomes worse than the status quo. In sum, when voters or legislators have information sufficient to make simple binary comparisons such as “better” and “worse,” then direct democracy can be an effective way to improve policy—and the studies cited in our earlier discussion of voter competence suggest that voters have sufficient information more often than critics allege.

Another problem with the circumstantial argument is that it neglects the influence of special interests in the legislature. It is probably fair to say that wealthy, organized interests are more influential than disorganized interests both in the legislature and in initiative campaigns. The question, then, is whether special interests are *relatively* more influential in the legislative or in the initiative process. It could be, for example, that the direct democracy playing field is tilted in favor of special interests but less so than the playing field of more traditional legislative processes.

Neither the circumstantial evidence nor theory provides a clear answer as to whether special interests gain from the initiative process. The only way to find the answer is by examining the evidence of how direct democracy has functioned in practice. The most extensive attempt to answer the question is that of Matsusaka (2004), who studies data spanning the entire twentieth century at both the state and local level and asks whether the initiative has brought about policies favored by special interests or by the majority. (A special interest is defined as an interest contrary to the majority’s interest.) The core evidence in Matsusaka’s book concerns fiscal policy of state and local governments over the past several decades. The research strategy is first to document how the initiative changed fiscal policy and then to compare those changes with public opinion surveys to see if a majority

of people opposed the changes, as the special interest subversion view implies, or favored the changes. Over the past three decades, three fiscal effects of the initiative are documented (Ch. 3): (a) The initiative cut spending and taxes, (b) the initiative decentralized spending from state to local governments, and (c) the initiative shifted revenue out of broad-based taxes and into user fees and charges for services. Matsusaka (Ch. 4) examines a variety of opinion data in which people expressed their preferences about spending, taxes, the division of spending between state and local governments, and revenue mix. The opinion evidence consistently shows that a majority of people favored the changes brought about by the initiative. In no case was there a majority opposed to the changes. The idea that the initiative allows special interests to subvert the policy process to the detriment of the public is not supported by any of the evidence.

Gerber's (1999) finding on parental abortion notification and death penalty policies points in the same direction. Although she examines only a single year, and her analysis does not focus on this point directly, it can be shown that her estimates imply that policies in initiative states were more likely to be consistent with majority opinion than policies in noninitiative states (see Matsusaka 2004, Appendix 4).

Lascher et al. (1996) and Camobreco (1998) also adopt a scientific approach to the problem. Both studies attempt to compare the responsiveness of policy to public opinion in initiative and noninitiative states across a number of policy dimensions. They find little effect. However, their results are generally statistically insignificant, preventing strong inferences from being drawn, and in any case rest on a problematic methodology (Matsusaka 2001).

To summarize, it appears that direct democracy has not led to special interest subversion when it comes to fiscal policies and certain social policies over the past several decades. There may be other policy dimensions not yet studied in which the special interest subversion view is correct. However, the fact that none of the existing evidence supports that view argues for its rejection until confirmatory evidence appears.

The picture that emerges is of the initiative as a majoritarian device. As discussed above, the initiative has pushed policy in a conservative direction over the past several decades. If we put the facts together, the implication is that, over the past several decades, legislatures have tended to deliver policy to the left of majority opinion, and the initiative has provided the majority with a way to correct what they see as the mistakes of their representatives. Matsusaka (2004, Ch. 7) reports additional evidence that supports this view. It turns out that the antitax effect of the initiative was especially strong in the 1970s and 1990s, two periods during which public opinion was drifting in a conservative direction (e.g., Stimson 1999), but the initiative did not affect taxes in the 1980s, a period when public opinion was shifting in a liberal direction. One interpretation is that direct democracy causes policy to react more swiftly to changes in public opinion than does policy making by legislatures.

The view of the initiative as a way to correct nonmajoritarian policies of the legislature can also explain why the initiative drove up spending in the early twentieth

century.³ In the decades surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century, the economy underwent a dramatic shift from a rural to an urban economy. Urban voters wanted increased government spending on education, roads, sewers, welfare, old-age pensions, and so on. However, rural interests controlled the legislatures because district lines tended to overweight the countryside (this was before the one-person one-vote principle was established). In the face of recalcitrant legislatures, the initiative allowed the new urban majority to directly approve its new spending programs.

CONCLUSION

This essay describes a new approach to research on direct democracy that has emerged in recent years in the wake of breakthroughs in theory and empirical analysis. We have not attempted to be comprehensive. Indeed, to highlight what the new science of direct democracy can do, we have also chosen to highlight findings that are in stark contrast to the largely negative conclusions of writers in previous decades. Much of the new research paints a comparatively positive picture of the initiative and referendum. For example, voters are more competent and the relationship between money and power is less nefarious than many observers allege. Other evidence suggests that the mere presence of direct democracy makes policy more responsive to public opinion.

The same research also demonstrates, however, that direct democracy is no panacea. If voters cannot find effective information shortcuts, then direct democracy may end up producing outcomes that they later regret. Despite substantial evidence that the mere presence of direct democracy induces more median-oriented policy outcomes (whether through direct means or the indirect means identified by scholars such as Gerber and Matsusaka), median outcomes may not always be a good thing. Indeed, much of the Constitutional apparatus of American government is intended to prohibit median outcomes when the majority threatens the rights of the minority. In addition, the historical record reminds us that the process can also be abused if run in conjunction with intimidation or manipulation at the ballot box (see, e.g., Lupia & Johnston 2001 for an examination of the litany of abuses associated with referendums in the Napoleonic era).

To limit such abuses and to increase the likelihood that direct democracy serves the public well, it is essential to understand how it works. Scientific approaches can help. Empirical research can help weed out theories that sound reasonable but are contradicted by the data, while strengthening theories that survive empirical evaluations. Theoretical research can help distill seemingly persuasive but logically inconsistent conclusions from claims that truly follow from concrete observations. Collectively, such endeavors can help societies more accurately understand

³This paragraph is based on Ch. 7 of Matsusaka (2004).

and more effectively adapt to the challenges posed by direct democracy's "old questions."

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BAYESIAN ANALYSIS FOR POLITICAL RESEARCH

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Key Words Bayesian statistics, sensitivity analysis, Markov chain Monte Carlo, roll call analysis, legislative ideal points

■ **Abstract** Bayesian data analysis relies on Bayes' Theorem, using data to update prior beliefs about parameters. In this review I introduce and contrast Bayesian analysis with conventional frequentist inference and then distinguish two types of Bayesian analysis in political science. First, Bayesian analysis is used to merge historical information with current data in an analysis of likely election outcomes in Florida in 2000; particular attention is paid to the sensitivity of the results to the choice of prior (i.e., how much confidence one places in the historical information). Second, a more "modern" style of Bayesian analysis is reviewed, relying on Markov chain Monte Carlo algorithms to generate computationally intensive "random tours" of the high dimensional posterior distributions that are the focus of many contemporary Bayesian analyses; the example used is a central problem in political science, the analysis of legislators' preferences using roll call data.

1. WHAT IS BAYESIAN ANALYSIS?

Generally, "Bayesian analysis" refers to statistical analysis of data that relies on Bayes' Theorem, presented below. Bayes' Theorem tells us how to update "prior beliefs" about parameters or hypotheses in light of data and arrive at "posterior beliefs." Or, even more simply, Bayes' Theorem tells us how to learn about parameters from data, in a way consistent with the laws of probability. As we shall see, Bayesian analysis is often more easily said than done, or at least this was the case until recently. In the 1990s there was a veritable explosion of interest in Bayesian analysis in the statistics profession, which has now crossed over into quantitative social science. The mathematics and computation underlying Bayesian analysis have been dramatically simplified via a suite of algorithms known collectively as Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC), to be discussed below. The combination of MCMC and vast increases in computing power available to most social scientists means that Bayesian analysis is now truly part of the mainstream of quantitative social science.

In particular, Bayesian analysis is now feasible and attractive for a set of researchers who are not especially interested in the use of Bayes' Theorem and prior

beliefs in their data analyses but are attracted to the power and ease of MCMC algorithms as a tool for estimation and inference for complex models. In many applications of MCMC, researchers employ “diffuse priors,” which (as explained below) effectively mean that the conclusions of the analysis are driven almost entirely by the data, just as they are in traditional likelihood-based analyses. In these cases, MCMC is often adopted as a set of techniques for finding the mode and exploring the shape of a likelihood function. Of course, it is always possible to bring prior information about model parameters to bear via “informative” priors.

Bayes’ Theorem is at the heart of Bayesian analysis. Before proceeding to review Bayesian analysis in political science, I review the theorem, introducing some notation and definitions and showing Bayesian analysis at work in some simple applications.

2. PRELIMINARIES: LIKELIHOOD AND BAYES’ THEOREM

2.1. Likelihood

The overwhelming bulk of data analysis in the social science uses probability models to relate observed data $\mathbf{y} = (y_1, \dots, y_n)'$ to unknown parameters θ . A simple example involves modeling independent and identically distributed normal data in terms of its mean μ and its variance σ^2 : $y_i \sim N(\mu, \sigma^2)$, where i indexes the observations $1, \dots, n$. The familiar linear regression model follows by replacing the single parameter μ with $\mathbf{x}_i\beta$, where β is a vector of unknown parameters. Generically, we can write these probability models as $\mathbf{y} \sim f(\mathbf{y} | \theta)$.

The “likelihood function” summarizes the information about θ in \mathbf{y} , defined as any function of θ proportional to $f(\mathbf{y} | \theta)$ (e.g., Tanner 1996, p. 14):

$$\mathcal{L}(\theta | \mathbf{y}) \propto f(\mathbf{y} | \theta). \quad 1.$$

Both the frequentist and Bayesian approaches to statistical inference exploit the likelihood function. Frequentist inference treats θ as fixed but unknown, and sample-based estimates of θ , $\hat{\theta}$, as random (since repeated sampling, if undertaken, could yield different values of $\hat{\theta}$). The most widely used estimate of θ is the “maximum likelihood estimate,” that value of θ that maximizes Equation 1. Frequentists use the likelihood function to evaluate the plausibility of the other $\hat{\theta}$ that might hypothetically result from repeated sampling, relative to the observed sample estimate $\hat{\theta}$. Neyman-Pearson-type inferential procedures, such as likelihood ratio tests, follow fairly straightforwardly from this perspective (e.g., Edwards 1992; Bernardo & Smith 1994, pp. 450–55). This approach to statistical inference has been championed within political science by King (1989).

Bayesian inference takes $\hat{\theta}$ as fixed (a feature of the observed data \mathbf{y}) and θ as random (in the sense that the researcher is uncertain of its true value). Bayesians use probability—the formal quantification of uncertainty—to characterize this uncertainty. Bayesian analysis produces posterior probability statements about

θ (“posterior” literally in the sense of “after” observing the data). The likelihood function summarizes the sample information about θ and thus provides an essential ingredient in Bayesian statistics, as we shall now see.

2.2. Bayes’ Theorem

Bayes’ Theorem is also frequently referred to as Bayes’ Rule and is one of the most important results in all of statistics. In its simplest form, for discrete events, if H is a hypothesis and E is evidence (i.e., data), then Bayes’ Theorem is

$$\Pr(H | E) = \frac{\Pr(E \cap H)}{\Pr(E)} = \frac{\Pr(E | H)\Pr(H)}{\Pr(E)},$$

provided $\Pr(E) > 0$, so that $\Pr(H | E)$ is the probability of belief in H after obtaining E , and $\Pr(H)$ is the prior probability of H before considering E . The left-hand side of the theorem, $\Pr(H | E)$, is usually referred to as the posterior probability of H . The theorem thus supplies a solution to the general problem of inference or induction (e.g., Hacking 2001), providing a mechanism for learning about a hypothesis H from data E .

Bayes’ Theorem itself is uncontroversial. It is merely an accounting identity that follows from the axiomatic foundations of probability that link joint, conditional, and marginal probabilities, i.e., $\Pr(A | B)\Pr(B) = \Pr(A \cap B)$, where $\Pr(B) \neq 0$. Thus, Bayes’ Theorem is sometimes referred to as the rule of inverse probability, since it shows how a conditional probability B given A can be “inverted” to yield the conditional probability A given B (Leamer 1978, p. 39).

In most analyses in the social sciences, we want to learn about a continuous parameter rather than the discrete parameters considered in the discussion thus far. Examples include the mean of a continuous variable in some population, or a proportion (a continuous parameter on the unit interval), or a regression coefficient. As above, we refer to a generic parameter as θ and denote the data available for analysis as $\mathbf{y} = (y_1, \dots, y_n)'$. In this case, beliefs over the parameter are represented as probability density functions. Generically, we denote the prior as $\pi(\theta)$ and the posterior as $\pi(\theta | \mathbf{y})$. Bayes’ Theorem for a continuous parameter is

$$\pi(\theta | \mathbf{y}) = \frac{\pi(\mathbf{y}; \theta)\pi(\theta)}{\int \pi(\mathbf{y}; \theta)\pi(\theta) d\theta}$$

but is more commonly expressed as

$$\pi(\theta | \mathbf{y}) \propto \pi(\mathbf{y}; \theta)\pi(\theta), \tag{2}$$

where $\pi(\mathbf{y}; \theta)$ is the likelihood function (i.e., the likelihood function is simply the probability of the data given the parameter). In words, we can state this version of Bayes’ Theorem as “the posterior is proportional to the prior times the likelihood.” This well-known “Bayesian mantra” highlights a particularly elegant feature of the Bayesian approach: The likelihood function can be turned into a probability statement about θ , given data \mathbf{y} .

Several interesting features of Bayesian analysis are immediately apparent via inspection of Bayes' Theorem:

1. The Bayesian approach treats the parameter θ as a random variable and makes inferences conditional on the data, whereas frequentist approaches consider θ a fixed (but unknown) property of a population from which we randomly sample data y .
2. If the prior for θ is uniform [i.e., $\pi(\theta) = c > 0$, or any value of θ is as likely as any other, a priori], then the posterior density is simply proportional to the likelihood, since the uniform prior is absorbed into the constant of proportionality in Equation 2. This means that the posterior density has the same shape as the likelihood function. In turn, this means that when prior beliefs about parameters are uniform, reflecting "prior ignorance" about θ , then the results of a Bayesian analysis and a likelihood-based analysis will coincide. The maximum likelihood estimate (that value of θ where the likelihood function is maximized) corresponds to the location of the mode of the posterior density, and if the posterior is symmetric, the maximum likelihood estimate will also correspond to the location of the posterior mean. Put differently, from a Bayesian perspective, likelihood-based analyses of data assume prior ignorance, although seldom is this assumption made explicit, even if it is plausible.
3. If the prior density assigns zero weight to specific ranges of θ , then those ranges have zero posterior probability. Priors that have this property have the effect of truncating the range of feasible estimates for θ .

2.3. Historical Note

Bayes' Theorem is named for the Reverend Thomas Bayes, who died in 1761. Bayes' Theorem first appeared in an essay attributed to Bayes (1763) and communicated to the Royal Society after Bayes' death by Richard Price in 1763, which has been republished many times (e.g., Bayes 1958). Bayes himself only stated the result for a uniform prior. According to Stigler (1986b), in 1774 Laplace, apparently unaware of Bayes' work, stated the theorem in its more general form (for discrete events). Additional historical detail can be found elsewhere (Bernardo & Smith 1994, ch. 1; Lindley 2001; Stigler 1986a, ch. 3).

3. EXAMPLE 1: POLLING RESULTS

In early March of 2000, Mason-Dixon Polling and Research conducted a poll of voting intentions in Florida for the November U.S. presidential election. The poll considered Bush and Gore the presumptive nominees of their respective political parties. The poll had a sample size of 621 and resulted in the following breakdown of reported vote intentions: Bush 45%, Gore 37%, Buchanan 3%, and undecided

15%. For simplicity, we ignore the undecided and Buchanan vote share, leaving Bush with 55% of the two-party vote intentions and Gore with 45%, and $n = 509$ respondents expressing a preference for one of the major-party candidates. Although the data are binomial, with this relatively large n , a normal distribution provides an excellent approximation to the (frequentist) sampling distribution of the Bush and Gore vote shares, with standard error $\sqrt{(0.55 \times 0.45)/509} = 0.022$; in turn, this implies that a 95% confidence interval on Bush vote share extends from 50.7% to 59.3%. Put differently, this early poll unambiguously points to Bush leading Gore in Florida in the 2000 presidential race.

But how realistic is this early poll result? Is there other information available that bears on the election result? Previous presidential elections are an obvious source of information, which I exploit by using a simple regression model. I model all state-level presidential election outcomes from 1932 to 1996 with fixed effects (dummy variables) for state and year; as in the analysis of the survey above, the dependent variable is the Republican proportion of the two-party vote. I then use this regression model to make a prediction for Florida in 2000, picking up the fixed effect for Florida and selecting the median fixed effect for year (i.e., assuming that 2000 would be a typical election in terms of the national swing toward either major party). This prediction is 49.1%, with a standard error of 2.2 percentage points.

We can combine the information yielded by this analysis of previous elections with the survey via Bayes' Theorem. We can consider the prediction from the regression analysis as supplying a prior and consider the survey as data—but mathematically, it does not matter what label we assign each piece of information. As we shall now see, applying Bayes' Theorem is identical to pooling information about an underlying parameter.

To apply Bayes' Theorem in this case, I assume that the information supplied by the regression analysis can be characterized as a normal distribution, with mean equal to the point prediction (49.1%) and standard deviation equal to the standard error of the point prediction (2.2 percentage points). This is the prior density for this problem. Likewise, the information in the survey is summarized with a normal distribution, with mean 55% and standard deviation of 2.2 percentage points. Thus, both the prior and the likelihood for this problem are normal distributions, meaning that the posterior density will also be normal; in general, when the posterior density is of the same functional form as the prior density, then the prior is said to be “conjugate” to the likelihood (and indeed, priors are often chosen so as to have this property).

Generally, given a normal prior $\pi(\theta) \equiv N(\mu_0, \sigma_0^2)$ and a normal likelihood $\pi(y; \theta) = N(\mu_1, \sigma_1^2)$, with σ_1^2 known the posterior density is $\pi(\theta | y) = N(\mu_2, \sigma_2^2)$, where $\mu_2 = (\mu_0/\sigma_0^2 + \mu_1/\sigma_1^2)/(1/\sigma_0^2 + 1/\sigma_1^2)$; and $\sigma_2^2 = (1/\sigma_0^2 + 1/\sigma_1^2)^{-1}$. [For a proof, see any introductory text on Bayesian statistics, such as Lee (1989) or Gelman et al. (1995).] The mathematics of this conjugate normal/normal problem has a simple interpretation: The posterior mean is a weighted average of the prior mean and the maximum likelihood estimate, with weights equal to the precision of each, where the precisions of each distribution are the inverses of the respective

variances. Thus, the posterior is a compromise between prior and data, where the precisions (inverse variances) tell us how to weight each.

Applying this result to the problem at hand, we have $\mu_0 = 0.491$, $\mu_1 = 0.55$, and $\sigma_0 = \sigma_1 = 0.022^2$, and so the posterior over Bush's two-party vote share in Florida is a normal distribution with mean 52.1% and standard deviation 1.6 percentage points. This means that the 95% (posterior) confidence interval ranges from 48.9% to 55.2%, with 90% of the posterior probability density lying above 50% (i.e., the probability that Bush defeats Gore is 90%). Combining the survey result with the prior still leaves us reasonably confident that Bush would beat Gore, but the evidence is now more mixed and perhaps more plausible. Figure 1 provides a graphical display of the Bayesian analysis. The posterior mean lies between the prior and the survey result; it is also obvious that the posterior density has less dispersion (more precision) than the prior or the survey result alone.

3.1. Sensitivity Analysis

Of course, reasonable people could hold differing prior beliefs as to Bush's vote support. For instance, someone might dispute the relevance of the historical election data. Even if one considered the historical election data relevant, one might dispute the idea that, a priori, 2000 would be on a par with the "median year" for the Democratic presidential candidate. Thus, in many Bayesian analyses, it is useful to perform a sensitivity analysis, examining how the posterior density changes

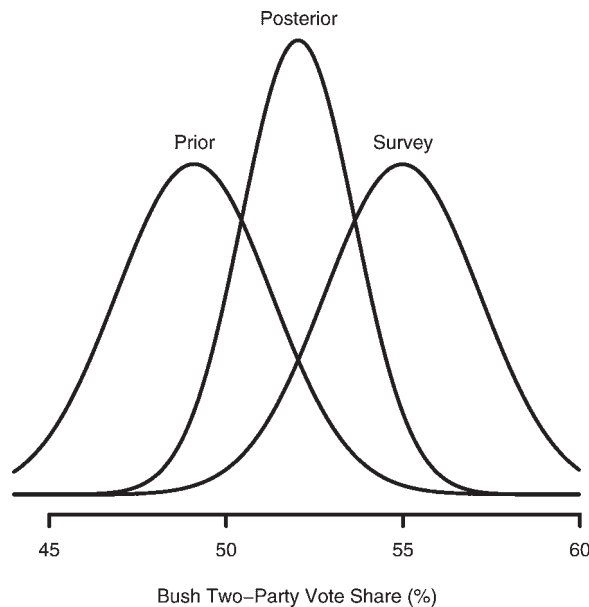


Figure 1 Example 1, Bayesian analysis of Bush support in Florida, 2000 election.

as one adopts different priors, so as to reassure oneself that one’s own conclusions would also be reached by someone else with similar (albeit not identical) priors.

There are two primary ways of performing sensitivity analyses in practice. First, we can arbitrarily weaken or strengthen the prior adopted above by multiplying the prior variance by a scale parameter $\lambda \geq 0$. Setting $\lambda = 0$ generates a degenerate “spike prior” with zero variance and hence infinite precision, a prior from which no amount of data can move us. For $\lambda > 1$ we obtain a less precise version of the prior, with successively larger values of λ generating successively weaker or “un-informative” priors; the resulting posterior densities are successively dominated by the data. As $\lambda \rightarrow \infty$, the data completely dominate the prior, the posterior has the same shape as the likelihood (i.e., the prior is tending toward a “locally uniform prior,” in the sense of being flat over the region of the parameter space supporting the likelihood), and the Bayesian analysis yields the same conclusions as analysis based on the likelihood.

The other approach to sensitivity analysis does not simply weaken or strengthen the analyst’s prior but instead repeats the Bayesian analysis with an array of more or less plausible different prior densities. We can then identify the set of priors that lead to qualitatively similar conclusions and note the size of this set. One might use this type of sensitivity analysis to ask whether there is any substantively plausible prior that leads to other conclusions than those obtained with one’s own prior.

For the current example, the first type of sensitivity analysis yields the posterior densities summarized in Figure 2. In the left panel, the thick, S-shaped solid line represents the location of the posterior mean (vertical axis) as a function of the sensitivity parameter λ , and the thinner solid lines show the 2.5% and 97.5% quantiles of the posterior. As $\lambda \rightarrow 0$, the posterior tends toward a degenerate

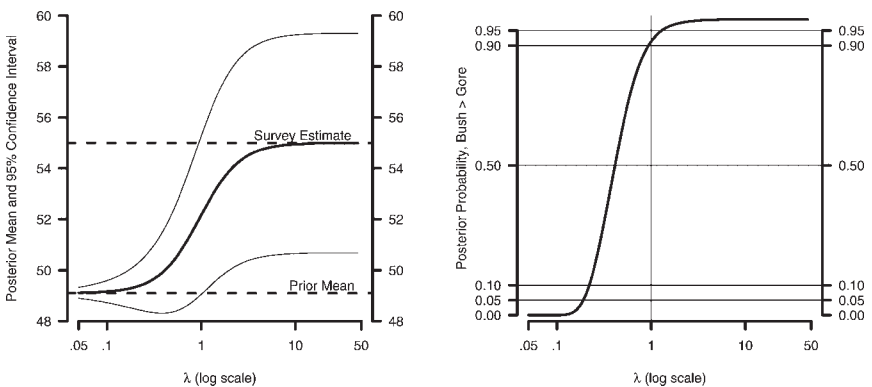


Figure 2 Example 1, sensitivity analysis. Left: The thick solid line shows the posterior mean as a function of the sensitivity parameter, λ , and the thinner solid lines show the 2.5% and 97.5% quantiles of the posterior. Right: The posterior probability that Bush’s vote share exceeds Gore’s, as a function of λ .

distribution with point mass on the prior mean of 49.1%. On the other hand, as $\lambda \rightarrow \infty$, the posterior becomes the normal distribution implied by the data. The right panel of Figure 2 shows the posterior probability that Bush's vote share is greater than Gore's as a function of λ . With $\lambda > 1$, this probability is greater than 0.90, and only with a substantially stronger version of the prior (say, $\lambda < 0.5$) does the probability that Bush's vote share exceeds Gore's drop below 0.5. On balance, we see that the finding that Bush's support exceeds Gore's is robust over a wide range of priors. We would need a prior twice as precise as the one we specified to find the balance of evidence pointing the other way.

Figure 3 shows another type of sensitivity analysis. The mapping from a set of conjugate normal priors to posteriors is presented as a contour plot, with the contours indicating the posterior probability that Bush's vote share exceeds Gore's. Each prior is defined by a mean (horizontal axis) and standard deviation (vertical axis), with the priors becoming less precise as we move up the graph. The graph

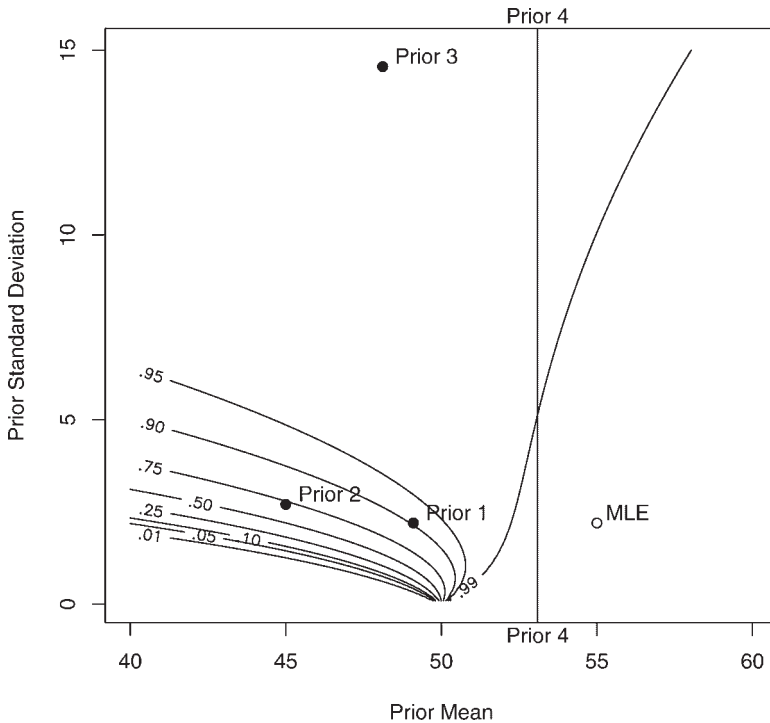


Figure 3 Example 1, sensitivity analysis via a “Bayesian map.” This contour graph shows the mapping from (conjugate) normal priors to the posterior probability that Bush's vote share exceeds Gore's. Each point on the graph defines a normal prior with a mean (horizontal axis) and standard deviation (vertical axis). The contour lines indicate points in the prior space with the indicated posterior probability of Bush's two-party vote share exceeding Gore's. MLE, maximum likelihood estimate.

shows three types of prior. Prior 1 is the prior used above, suggested by the analysis of state-level election returns (mean = 49.1% and standard deviation = 2.2 percentage points); this prior does not strongly contradict the survey data, and the resulting posterior probability that Bush's vote share exceeds Gore's is 0.90. The sensitivity analysis in the previous section corresponds to a vertical line through Prior 1. Prior 2 is generated similarly to Prior 1 (regression analysis of state-level presidential election results with fixed effects for state), but instead of fixed effects for year, it includes a dummy variable for whether Democrats held the White House. This yields a prior more favorable to Gore (45% Republican vote share), but the posterior probability that Bush's vote share exceeds Gore's remains above 0.5. Prior 3 results from taking the average (and standard deviation) of Florida presidential elections, 1932–1996; there is considerable variation in these election results, giving rise to the large standard deviation, and the posterior is largely shaped by the survey data. Prior 4 is actually not one single prior but a set of priors generated by taking the average of the Republican share of the two-party vote in the three previous presidential elections in Florida (1988, 1992, and 1996), which is 53.1%, and considering a range of prior standard deviations (corresponding to different degrees of confidence in the prior mean). Three of the four priors largely agree with the survey data, leading to the conclusion that Bush's vote share exceeds Gore's; Prior 2 is a stronger "Democratic" prior and results in an inconclusive posterior, although the balance of the posterior uncertainty lies in a pro-Bush direction.

Finally, the map in Figure 3 shows just how strong one's priors would have to be so as to receive the "message" of the survey data but still conclude that on balance, Gore's support exceeded Bush's. The corresponding region of the "conjugate prior space" lies below the 0.50 probability contour. For example, a prior mean of 44% and a prior standard deviation of one percentage point would yield a posterior favorable to Gore, although the historical data do not readily admit such a prior.

4. PROPERTIES OF CONJUGATE ANALYSIS

Some other properties of conjugate Bayesian analysis should also be noted. For conjugate problems with normal distributions with known variances, the posterior precision is (weakly) greater than either the prior precision or the precision of the data, and indeed equals the sum of these two precisions. Put differently, we never lose precision by combining the information about θ in data with the information about θ in a conjugate prior. Further, with enough data, say from repeated applications of the data generation process, the posterior precision will continue to increase and will eventually overwhelm any nondegenerate prior. The upshot is that analysts with different (nondegenerate) prior beliefs over θ will eventually agree about θ provided they (a) see enough data and (b) update their beliefs using Bayes' Theorem. Because of these properties, Bayesian analysis has been heralded as a model for scientific practice: Reasonable people may differ (at least prior to

seeing data) but our views will tend to converge as scientific knowledge accumulates, provided we update our views consistent with the laws of probability (i.e., via Bayes' Theorem).

5. BAYESIAN COMPUTATION VIA MARKOV CHAIN MONTE CARLO ALGORITHMS

I now turn to consider what is sometimes called “modern” Bayesian analysis: the exploration of posterior densities via computationally intensive Markov chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) algorithms. The use of these algorithms has made Bayesian analysis feasible for a wide class of models and priors.

5.1. The Goal of Bayesian Computation

As shown above, in practice, Bayesian analysis amounts to computing the posterior density for the parameters in the model being analyzed. For simple models, it is possible to use analytic results to characterize the posterior density; recall the example in Section 3 where the posterior density for Bush's vote share turned out to be that of a normal distribution, with its mean and variance easily computed. Other features of a normal posterior density are also immediately accessible. For instance, 95% confidence intervals are trivially computed as the posterior mean plus or minus 1.96 times the standard deviation (assuming the variance to be known). Other confidence intervals or a critical quantile can be computed just as easily.

But for more interesting statistical models, the resulting posterior densities are not so straightforward to compute. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising how difficult Bayesian analysis can become once we leave behind “toy” problems. Even for models as familiar as probit or logit for binary responses, Bayesian analysis can become mathematically demanding and require considerable skill to work through the integrals inherent in Bayes' Theorem or to obtain summaries of the posterior density such as the posterior mean. These problems often become more challenging as the number of parameters in the model increases, since the posterior density becomes a multivariate density. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the posterior density can be neatly summarized by reporting its mean and standard deviation; the posterior density might be asymmetric or multimodal, in which case we might require a graphical summary (a histogram or density plot) to understand what the data are telling us about θ .

5.2. The Monte Carlo Principle

Fortunately, there exists an easily implemented solution to the general problem of computing posterior densities. The solution comes in two parts. The first part relies on the Monte Carlo principle:

Anything we want to know about a random variable θ , we can learn by repeated sampling from the probability density function of θ .

Moreover, the precision with which we learn about features of θ is limited only by the number of random samples we are willing to wait for our computer to draw for us. The Monte Carlo method has long been known to statisticians (e.g., Metropolis & Ulam 1949), but only recently have increases in computing power made this principle useful to quantitative social scientists.

This simulation-based approach greatly simplifies Bayesian analysis. To learn about θ we simply tell a computer to sample many times from the posterior density for θ . To communicate what we have learned about θ from the data, we can summarize those samples in a histogram or via some numerical summary. Traditional hypothesis testing amounts to simply noting how many of the sampled values of θ lie above or below zero, or any other threshold of interest. The second “MC” in “MCMC” stands for the use of the Monte Carlo principle. The first “MC” stands for “Markov chain,” which we consider next.

5.3. Using Markov Chains to Explore Multidimensional Parameter Spaces

Consider the generic problem of using data \mathbf{y} to learn about d parameters $\boldsymbol{\theta} = (\theta_1, \theta_2, \dots, \theta_d)'$. The posterior density for this problem, $\pi(\boldsymbol{\theta} | \mathbf{y})$, is d -dimensional. Via the Monte Carlo principle, we know that we can learn about the posterior density by sampling from it many times. But the multivariate posterior density may not have a convenient, analytical form corresponding to one of the probability distributions from which our computer knows how to sample.

Happily, an algorithm known as the Gibbs sampler makes it easy to sample $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ from its (multivariate) posterior density, $\pi(\boldsymbol{\theta} | \mathbf{y})$, by generating a random tour of the parameter space that supports the posterior. If the Gibbs sampler is at some arbitrary point $\boldsymbol{\theta}^{(t)} = (\theta_1^{(t)}, \theta_2^{(t)}, \dots, \theta_d^{(t)})$ at iteration t , then the (random) transition to $\boldsymbol{\theta}^{(t+1)}$ occurs via the following scheme:

1. Sample $\theta_1^{(t+1)}$ from $p(\theta_1 | \theta_2^{(t)}, \theta_3^{(t)}, \dots, \theta_d^{(t)}, \mathbf{Y})$.
2. Sample $\theta_2^{(t+1)}$ from $p(\theta_2 | \theta_1^{(t+1)}, \theta_3^{(t)}, \dots, \theta_d^{(t)}, \mathbf{Y})$.
- ⋮
- d . Sample $\theta_d^{(t+1)}$ from $p(\theta_d | \theta_1^{(t+1)}, \theta_2^{(t+1)}, \dots, \theta_{d-1}^{(t+1)}, \mathbf{Y})$.

A useful way to think about what the Gibbs sampler does is to see that the full joint posterior density for $\boldsymbol{\theta}$ has been broken down into a series of lower-dimensional conditional densities, circumventing the “curse of [high] dimensionality” (Gelfand 1997, p. 284). In turn this is driven by the fact (well known to Bayesians) that conditional densities determine marginal densities (Casella & George 1992, pp. 170–71).

The sequence of sampled vectors produced by this scheme, $\langle \boldsymbol{\theta}^{(t)} \rangle = \{\boldsymbol{\theta}^{(0)}, \boldsymbol{\theta}^{(1)}, \dots, \boldsymbol{\theta}^{(t)}, \dots\}$, form a Markov chain. More specifically, under a large set of

conditions, the sampled vector $\theta^{(t)}$ is the state vector of a convergent Markov chain that has the posterior distribution $p(\theta | Y)$ as its “invariant,” “stationary,” or “limiting” distribution.

“Very minimal conditions turn out to be sufficient and essentially necessary to ensure convergence of the distribution of the [MCMC] sampler’s state to the invariant distribution and to provide a law of large numbers for sample path averages” (Tierney 1996, p. 59). It is not possible to summarize these conditions in the space available here. A key condition for the existence of an invariant distribution for a Markov chain over a continuous state-space (a parameter space, in the context of MCMC) is irreducibility, which (informally) means that “the chain must be able to reach all interesting parts of the state-space” (Tierney 1996, p. 62). That is, if regions of the parameter space with positive posterior probability are noncontiguous, the Markov chain must be able to “jump” the zero-probability regions in a finite number of transitions; otherwise, the Markov chain is exploring only a subset of the feasible parameter space, yielding a misleading characterization of the posterior density. In most statistical applications this condition holds, but interesting counterexamples can be easily constructed (e.g., Gamerman 1997, p. 124).

If these conditions are met, then the output of the Gibbs sampler, $\theta^{(t)}$, converges in distribution to the target posterior density as $t \rightarrow \infty$. More simply, when the Markov chain has been run for a sufficient “burn-in” period, each subsequent realization of the state vector is a sample from this posterior distribution. These samples from the posterior distribution are stored and summarized for inference. Any other relevant quantities that are functions of θ can also be calculated with each Gibbs sample, once the Markov chain reaches its invariant distribution. Examples include the proportion of sampled θ that lie above or below zero, the observed data log-likelihood, residuals in a regression setting, or the percentage of cases correctly classified in a qualitative dependent-variable context.

5.4. Generalizations: Metropolis-Hastings

The Gibbs sampler is actually a special case of a more general random-tour algorithm known as the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm (Metropolis et al. 1953, Hastings 1970), which I briefly describe here; Chib & Greenberg (1995) provide a useful explanation of the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm and practical tips for its implementation. The Metropolis-Hastings algorithm defines a set of “jumping rules” that govern how the algorithm randomly traverses the parameter space. At the start of iteration t , we have $\theta^{(t-1)}$ and we make the transition to $\theta^{(t)}$ as follows (Gelman et al. 1995, pp. 324–26):

1. Sample θ^* from a “candidate,” “proposal,” or “jumping” distribution $J_t(\theta^* | \theta^{(t-1)})$.
2. Calculate the ratio

$$r = \frac{p(\theta^* | y) / J_t(\theta^* | \theta^{(t-1)})}{p(\theta^{(t-1)} | y) / J_t(\theta^{(t-1)} | \theta^*)}$$

which reflects the plausibility of the candidate point θ^* relative to the current value $\theta^{(t-1)}$.

3. Set

$$\theta^{(t)} = \begin{cases} \theta^* & \text{with probability } \min(r, 1) \\ \theta^{t-1} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

This scheme means that if the candidate point increases the posterior density, it is accepted with probability 1; if the candidate point does not increase the posterior density, it is accepted with probability r . It can be shown that this scheme generates a Markov chain that has the posterior density $p(\theta|y)$ as its invariant distribution. The power of the Metropolis-Hastings method stems from the fact that no matter what the form of the proposal distribution, the invariant distribution of the resulting Markov chain will still be the desired posterior distribution, $p(\theta|y)$; for proofs, see Gilks et al. (1996) and references cited therein. Gibbs sampling is a special case of the Metropolis-Hastings algorithm in the sense that each component of θ is updated sequentially and the implicit jumping distributions are simply the conditional densities $p(\theta_j|\theta_{-j}^{(t-1)}, y)$; this means that $r = 1$ and each candidate point is always accepted.

6. EXAMPLE 2: THE ANALYSIS OF ROLL CALL DATA

I illustrate MCMC algorithms with an empirical problem of wide interest in political science: the analysis of roll call data. The Bayesian analysis of roll call data is described in detail elsewhere (Jackman 2000, 2001; Clinton et al. 2004); here I provide an abbreviated discussion of the model and the statistical issues.

Roll call data are generated by n legislators voting on m different roll calls. Each roll call $j = 1, \dots, m$ presents legislators $i = 1, \dots, n$ with a choice between a “Yea” position ζ_j and a “Nay” position Ψ_j , locations in \mathbb{R}^d , where d denotes the dimension of the policy space. Let $y_{ij} = 1$ if legislator i votes “Yea” on the j th roll call and $y_{ij} = 0$ otherwise. Political scientists typically analyze roll call data using a Euclidean spatial voting model (Enelow & Hinich 1984). Legislators are assumed to have quadratic utility functions over the policy space, $U_i(\zeta_j) = -\|\mathbf{x}_i - \zeta_j\|^2 + \eta_{ij}$ and $U_i(\Psi_j) = -\|\mathbf{x}_i - \Psi_j\|^2 + v_{ij}$, where $\mathbf{x}_i \in \mathbb{R}^d$ is the “ideal point” of legislator i , and η_{ij} and v_{ij} are the errors or stochastic elements of utility, and $\|\cdot\|$ is the Euclidean norm. Utility maximization implies

$$y_{ij} = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } U_i(\zeta_j) > U_i(\Psi_j), \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \tag{3}$$

The specification is completed by assigning a distribution to the errors. We assume that the errors η_{ij} and v_{ij} have a joint normal distribution with $E(\eta_{ij}) = E(v_{ij})$, $\text{var}(\eta_{ij} - v_{ij}) = \sigma_j^2$ and that the errors are independent across both legislators and

roll calls. It follows that

$$\begin{aligned}
 P(y_{ij} = 1) &= P[U_i(\zeta_j) > U_i(\Psi_j)] \\
 &= P(v_{ij} - \eta_{ij} < \|\mathbf{x}_i - \Psi_j\|^2 - \|\mathbf{x}_i - \zeta_j\|^2) \\
 &= P(v_{ij} - \eta_{ij} < 2(\zeta_j - \Psi_j)' \mathbf{x}_i + \Psi_j' \Psi_j - \zeta_j' \zeta_j) \\
 &= \Phi(\beta_j' \mathbf{x}_i - \alpha_j),
 \end{aligned} \tag{4}$$

where $\beta_j = 2(\zeta_j - \Psi_j)/\sigma_j$, $\alpha_j = (\zeta_j' \zeta_j - \Psi_j' \Psi_j)/\sigma_j$, and $\Phi(\cdot)$ denotes the standard normal distribution function. This corresponds to a probit model (a logit model results if the errors have extreme value distributions), with an unobserved regressor \mathbf{x}_i corresponding to the legislator’s ideal point. The coefficient vector β_j is the direction of the j th proposal in the policy space relative to the “Nay” position.

Given the assumptions of independence across legislators and roll calls, the likelihood is

$$L(\mathbf{B}, \alpha, \mathbf{X} | \mathbf{Y}) = \prod_{i=1}^n \prod_{j=1}^m \Phi(\mathbf{x}_i' \beta_j - \alpha_j)^{y_{ij}} [1 - \Phi(\mathbf{x}_i' \beta_j - \alpha_j)]^{1-y_{ij}}, \tag{5}$$

where \mathbf{B} is an $m \times d$ matrix with j th row β_j' , $\alpha = (\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_m)'$, \mathbf{X} is an $n \times d$ matrix with i th row \mathbf{x}_i' , and \mathbf{Y} is the $n \times m$ matrix of observed votes with (i, j) th element y_{ij} . Without restrictions on the parameters, the model parameters are not identified, since any rescaling and/or rotation of \mathbf{X} is indistinguishable from an offsetting transformation of the \mathbf{B} parameters. A simple solution when fitting unidimensional models is to impose the constraint that the ideal points have mean zero and unit variance; I adopt this identifying constraint in the analysis below. Note that, in a Bayesian analysis, we can always ignore the lack of identification. The lack of identification is a feature of the likelihood and not necessarily a feature of the posterior density (because when the likelihood is flat with respect to the parameters, the posterior will coincide with the prior). Nonetheless, here I impose the identifying restriction.

The unidimensional spatial voting model is equivalent to the two-parameter item-response model used in educational testing, where β_j is the item-discrimination parameter and α_j is the item-difficulty parameter. But in the roll call context, the latent trait or “ability” parameter x_i is the ideal point of the i th legislator. Albert (1992), Patz & Junker (1999), and Johnson & Albert (1999) show how the Gibbs sampler can be used for a Bayesian analysis of this model, which I briefly summarize.

In a Bayesian setting, data analysis involves computing the joint posterior density of all model parameters; we denote this joint posterior density as $\pi(\mathbf{X}, \beta, \alpha | \mathbf{Y})$. In most applications, this density is extremely high dimension; with n legislators, m roll calls, and a d -dimensional spatial voting model, \mathbf{X} is an n -by- d matrix of unknown parameters, β is an m -by- d matrix, and α is a vector of length m , for a

TABLE 1 Number of parameters in roll call analyses

	Legislators <i>n</i>	Roll calls <i>m</i>	Dimensions (<i>d</i>)		
			1	2	3
U.S. Supreme Court, 1994–1997	9	213	435	657	879
105th U.S. Senate	100	534	1168	1802	2436
93rd U.S. House	442	917	2276	3635	4994
U.S. Senate, 1789–1985	1714	37,281	76,276	115,271	154,266
U.S. House, 1789–1985	9759	32,953	75,485	118,017	160,549

total of $nd + m(d + 1)$ parameters. Table 1 presents values of p for five different data sets. A moderately sized roll call data set (say the 105th U.S. Senate) with $n = 100$, $m = 534$ non-unanimous roll calls, and $d = 1$ yields $p = 1168$ unknown parameters, whereas a two-dimensional model yields $p = 1802$ parameters. A typical House of Representatives (e.g., the 93rd House) set has $n = 442$ and $m = 917$, and so a one-dimensional model has $p = 2276$ parameters whereas a two-dimensional model has $p = 3635$ parameters. Pooling across years dramatically increases the number of parameters. For instance, Poole & Rosenthal (1997) report that fitting a two-dimensional model to roughly 200 years of U.S. House of Representatives roll call data gives rise to an optimization problem with $p > 150,000$ parameters.

This proliferation of parameters causes several problems. The usual optimality properties of conventional estimators, such as maximum likelihood, may not hold when, as in this case, the number of parameters is a function of the sample size (see Lancaster 2000 for a recent survey). In particular, the customary asymptotic standard error calculations, using the inverse of the information matrix, are not valid. As a practical matter, the information matrix is too large for direct inversion. Poole & Rosenthal (1997, p. 246) take the obvious shortcut of fixing the bill parameters at their estimated values before calculating standard errors for the ideal point estimates. They acknowledge that this is invalid, but it reduces the computational burden by an order of magnitude.

The Bayesian methods of estimation and inference proposed here are valid for finite samples and do not employ any large-sample approximations. The number of parameters is fixed for any particular estimation problem by the actual number of legislators and roll calls, and Bayes' Theorem gives the exact posterior distribution of the parameters conditional on the observed data. The only approximation that is required involves the simulation of the posterior distribution, and this approximation can be made to any desired degree of accuracy by increasing the number of simulations (not the sample size). Thus, the Bayesian approach offers both practical and theoretical improvements over traditional approaches based on maximum likelihood.

6.1. The Gibbs Sampler for the Analysis of Roll Call Data

The idea that drives the Gibbs sampler for this problem is to recognize that any probit model can be rewritten as latent linear regression (e.g., Albert & Chib 1993). In the context of roll call analysis, this latent linear regression takes the form $y_{ij}^* = \mathbf{x}_i \beta_j - \alpha_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$, where $\varepsilon_{ij} \stackrel{iid}{\sim} N(0, 1)$ gives us a probit model and we observe a “Yea” vote ($y_{ij} = 1$) if $y_{ij}^* \geq 0$ and a “Nay” vote ($y_{ij} = 0$) if $y_{ij}^* < 0$. If we also specify normal priors on the unknown \mathbf{x}_i , β_j , and α_j , we have a conjugate regression Bayesian model for those parameters, where the latent y_{ij}^* is the dependent variable(s). The only issue is how to generate y_{ij}^* . This is rather straightforward; we simply add the y_{ij}^* to the parameter vector carried around by the Gibbs sampler. Thus, the Gibbs sampler for this problem consists of the sampling from the following conditional distributions, where t indexes iterations:

1. $g(y_{ij}^* | y_{ij}, \mathbf{x}_i^*, \beta_j, \alpha_j)$. At the start of iteration t , we have $\beta_j^{(t-1)}$, $\alpha_j^{(t-1)}$, and $\mathbf{x}_i^{(t-1)}$. We sample $y_{ij}^{*(t)}$ from one of the two following densities, depending on whether we observed a “Yea” ($y_{ij} = 1$) or a “Nay” ($y_{ij} = 0$):

$$y_{ij}^* | (y_{ij} = 0, \mathbf{x}_i^{(t-1)}, \beta_j^{(t-1)}, \alpha_j^{(t-1)}) \sim N(\mu_{ij}^{(t-1)}, 1) I(y_{ij}^* < 0)$$

(i.e., truncated normal) or

$$y_{ij}^* | (y_{ij} = 1, \mathbf{x}_i^{(t-1)}, \beta_j^{(t-1)}, \alpha_j^{(t-1)}) \sim N(\mu_{ij}^{(t-1)}, 1) I(y_{ij}^* \geq 0)$$

(i.e., truncated normal),

where $\mu_{ij}^{(t-1)} = \mathbf{x}_i^{(t-1)} \beta_j^{(t-1)} - \alpha_j^{(t-1)}$ and $I(\cdot)$ is an indicator function. For abstentions and other missing roll calls, we sample $y_{ij}^{*(t)}$ from the untruncated normal density $N(\mu_{ij}^{(t-1)}, 1)$, effectively generating multiple imputations for these missing data over iterations of the MCMC algorithm.

2. $g(\beta_j, \alpha_j | \mathbf{X}, y_{ij}^*)$. For $j = 1, \dots, m$, sample $\beta_j^{(t)}$ and $\alpha_j^{(t)}$ from the multivariate normal density with mean vector $[\mathbf{X}^* \mathbf{X}^* + \mathbf{T}_0^{-1}]^{-1} [\mathbf{X}^* \mathbf{y}_{\cdot j}^{*(t)} + \mathbf{T}_0^{-1} \tau_0]$ and variance-covariance matrix $[\mathbf{X}^* \mathbf{X}^* + \mathbf{T}_0^{-1}]^{-1}$, where \mathbf{X}^* is an n -by- $(d + 1)$ matrix with typical row $\mathbf{x}_i^* = (\mathbf{x}_i^{(t-1)}, -1)$, $\mathbf{y}_{\cdot j}^{*(t)}$ is an n -by-1 vector of sampled latent utility differentials for the j th roll call, and $N(\tau_0, \mathbf{T}_0)$ is the prior for β_j and α_j . I set $\tau_0 = 0$ and $\mathbf{T}_0 = \kappa \cdot \mathbf{I}_d$, where κ is an arbitrarily large constant (e.g., 25 or 100), to give a vague prior centered at the origin. This amounts to running Bayesian regressions of $\mathbf{y}_{\cdot j}^{*(t)}$ on $\mathbf{x}_i^{(t-1)}$ and a negative intercept and then sampling from the posterior density for the coefficients β_j and α_j , for $j = 1, \dots, m$.
3. $g(\mathbf{x}_i | y_{ij}^*, \beta_j, \alpha_j)$. Rearranging the latent linear regression yields $w_{ij} = y_{ij}^* + \alpha_j = \mathbf{x}_i' \beta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}$. Collapse these equations over the j subscript to yield the n regressions $\mathbf{w}_i = \mathbf{B} \mathbf{x}_i + \varepsilon_i$, where \mathbf{B} is the m -by- d matrix with the j th row given by β_j' . That is, we have n regressions, with the ideal points \mathbf{x}_i as parameters to be updated. Again exploiting conjugacy, the update is performed by sampling each $\mathbf{x}_i^{(t)}$ from the d -dimensional normal density with

mean vector $(\mathbf{B}'\mathbf{B} + \mathbf{V}_i^{-1})^{-1}(\mathbf{B}'\mathbf{w}_i + \mathbf{V}_i^{-1}\mathbf{v}_i)$ and variance-covariance matrix $(\mathbf{B}'\mathbf{B} + \mathbf{V}_i^{-1})^{-1}$, where \mathbf{v}_i and \mathbf{V}_i are the prior means and variance-covariance matrices for the ideal point of the i th legislator. Here I set $\mathbf{v}_i = \mathbf{0}$ and $\mathbf{V}_i = \mathbf{I}_d$ for all legislators.

Implementing this scheme requires only modest programming skill, and I have free software (Jackman 2003) that implements this algorithm via the R statistical package (also free). See also the implementation of Martin & Quinn (2003).

As an example, I use the Gibbs sampler to estimate a unidimensional spatial voting model fit to a small set of roll call data: all 213 non-unanimous decisions of the seventh “natural” Rehnquist court ($n = 9$) between 1994 and 1997 (Justices Rehnquist, Stevens, O’Connor, Scalia, Kennedy, Souter, Thomas, Ginsberg, and Breyer), which appear in the Spaeth (2001) data set. The decisions of the justices are coded as $y_{ij} = 1$ if justice i joins the majority on case j , and $y_{ij} = 0$ if he or she dissents; there are ten abstentions in the data. The Gibbs sampler is initialized at arbitrary values and allowed to run for half a million iterations; we retain only every thousandth iteration so as to produce an approximately independent sequence of sampled values from the joint posterior density. I (somewhat conservatively) discard the first half of the run as “burn-in,” leaving 250 sampled values for analysis.

Figure 4 shows the iterative history or “trace plots” of the Gibbs sampler for the nine ideal points (one for each justice). The plots strongly suggest that the Gibbs sampler has converged on the posterior density for the ideal points; the traces appear to be random walks around the respective posterior means. Figure 5 shows the posterior means and confidence intervals for the justices’ ideal points. Stevens is far away from the other justices, and Thomas and Scalia anchor the conservative end of the Court.

Finally, Figure 6 shows all possible pairwise slices through the joint posterior density of the ideal points. It is interesting to note that the ideal points are not independent a posteriori, a fact that is easily overlooked when we simply consider ideal point estimates and their standard errors via classical approaches. That is, in determining whether justice a was to the right or left of justice b , we would not simply rely on the pointwise confidence intervals in Figure 5, which are summaries of the uncertainty in each ideal point, and ignore the substantial covariation in ideal points.

Note that it is also possible to perform inference with respect to any function of the parameters; for instance, if we are interested in an estimand $\eta = g(\mathbf{X})$, then we simply compute $\eta^{(t)} = g(\mathbf{X}^{(t)})$ at iteration t of the Gibbs sampler and store the output. We can then perform inference for η . Examples include pairwise comparisons of ideal points, rank ordering the ideal points, the location of the median justice, cutting planes for each bill (or case), residuals, and goodness-of-fit summaries. The basic model introduced here has been extended in numerous directions to handle change in ideal points over time (Martin & Quinn 2002) and evolution of the legislative agenda (Clinton & Mierowitz 2001); as Clinton

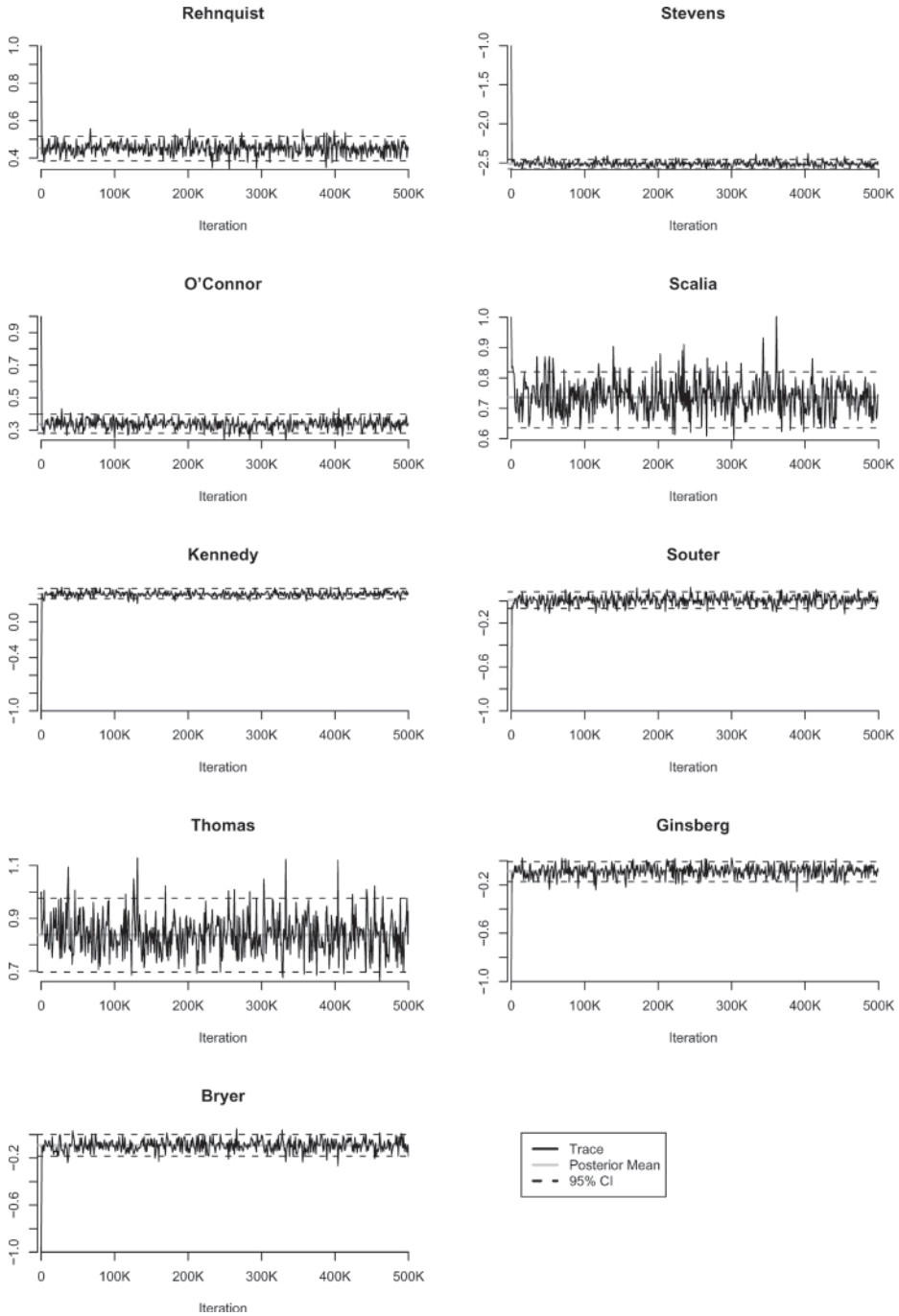


Figure 4 Trace plots.



Figure 5 Posterior means and pointwise 95% confidence intervals. Means and confidence intervals are computed using the last 250,000 iterations (thinned by 1000).



Figure 6 Pairwise trace plots and posterior densities. Traces and summaries are for the last 250,000 iterations (thinned by 1000). The ellipses mark 50% and 95% confidence intervals around the mean, using a bivariate normal approximation.

et al. (2004) highlight, these extensions are easily implemented using the Bayesian machinery presented here.

7. CONCLUSION

This review has contrasted two styles of Bayesian analysis used in political science. To illustrate the basics of Bayesian analysis (and the central role of the prior), I showed how a simple conjugate Bayesian analysis lets us integrate historical data

with current information about an estimand of substantive political interest (likely election outcomes in Florida). In a Bayesian analysis of this sort, where the prior is not innocuous, sensitivity analysis is worth doing and worth communicating to one's readers. In the second part of this review, the emphasis is on Bayesian computation. In the example of roll call data analysis, I attacked a high-dimensional statistical problem with the Gibbs sampler. Although I placed vague priors on all model parameters, the analysis is nonetheless Bayesian. I exploited Bayesian tools for estimation (MCMC algorithms) and the Bayesian approach to inference; that is, the posterior density summarizes uncertainty in the parameters after looking at the roll call data, and unlike in classical approaches, we need not rely on speculative notions of asymptotics and/or repeated sampling to support our inferences.

Constraints of space mean that other political science applications of Bayesian statistics cannot be considered here. These include hierarchical modeling (e.g., Western 1998) and model averaging (e.g., Bartels & Zaller 2001). These applications also exploit the essential ingredients of Bayesian analysis discussed in this review: priors and the new tools that dramatically simplify Bayesian computation. Detailed treatments of these topics and others appear in the book-length treatments of Carlin & Louis (2000) and Gill (2002), the latter specially tailored for a social science readership. Bayesian analysis via MCMC has been extremely simplified by the WinBUGS computer program (Spiegelhalter et al. 2000); books by Congdon (2001, 2003) contain many examples of Bayesian analysis with WinBUGS, largely drawn from the biostatistical literature but easily applicable to the social sciences.

The past 15 years have seen something of a revolution in statistics. The popularization and widespread adoption of MCMC algorithms mean that models and data sets long relegated to the "too-hard" basket are now being analyzed. The effects of this revolution are beginning to be felt in political science, with the result that Bayesian analysis is no longer just an exotic tool for methodological specialists and is finding a place in the toolkit of workaday political scientists.

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