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KAREN MOSSBERGER,  
SUSAN E. CLARKE, AND  
PETER JOHN

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## CHAPTER 16

# THE CENTRALITY OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC POLITICS IN AMERICAN CITIES AND TOWNS

PARU SHAH AND MELISSA MARSCHALL

For more than 40 years, scholars have turned to cities to examine the intersection of race/ethnicity and politics. In particular, they have considered how race/ethnicity shapes racial and political attitudes, policy preferences, voting behavior, and political processes and outcomes. The dramatic racial and ethnic transformation of the U.S. population taking place over the last several decades means that scholars must be ever more mindful of the changing landscape in their conceptualizations, theories, and empirical analyses of local politics and governance. How has the rapid increase of Latino and Asian populations across the U.S. affected the likelihood of minority representation and what are the future prospects for minority groups? Will we see more intergroup cooperation in the future or are heightened competition and conflict the more likely outcomes? What are the implications of multiracial and multiethnic cities for how race influences the attitudes and behaviors of local residents? How do these trends shape the nature, process, and outcomes of local politics and public policy?

In this chapter, we begin by first reviewing the significant developments in the racial and ethnic composition of local places in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> in order to set the stage for our analysis of why racial and ethnic politics plays such a central role in

1. All cities in our analysis are defined by the census as a "place," or a locality established to provide governmental functions for a concentration of people. Thus, we include cities, towns, villages, and boroughs.

American local politics and perhaps more importantly, what the future holds as the U.S. continues the transformation to a multiracial and multicultural nation. As others have acknowledged, similar demographic changes are underway in Europe (OECD 2007; Bloemraad et al. 2008), and although our chapter focuses exclusively on the U.S., these parallel developments suggest that race and ethnicity are becoming increasingly central to local politics in Europe as well. From here we examine three areas of inquiry that scholars studying racial and ethnic dimensions of local politics have and will likely continue to focus on. We begin with minority representation and the role of race and ethnicity in shaping the electoral and officeholding fortunes of minority candidates. Second, we consider the implications of minority representation, both symbolically as a precursor to psychological shifts in political efficacy and trust, and substantively, moving policy toward co-racial/ethnic preferences. Lastly, we turn our attention to the literature on the relationship between racial/ethnic context and individual-level attitudes and political behaviors.

To be sure, the literature on the racial/ethnic dimensions of cities and local politics is vast and we cannot begin to capture the incredible diversity of questions, approaches, and theories included in this literature. Thus, our strategy is to focus on some of the persistent puzzles in the literature while at the same time outlining a set of new questions posed by the changing racial/ethnic paradigm in the U.S. We conclude by outlining several specific ways in which future scholarship can proceed in addressing these lines of inquiry.

## 1. THE CHANGING RACIAL AND ETHNIC LANDSCAPE OF AMERICA, 1980–2000

There was a time in U.S. history when the term "racial minority" was synonymous with African American. Since other racial and ethnic minorities constituted a very small portion of the population, they were assumed to be insignificant as a political force. However, demographic changes over the past several decades have introduced complications to this conceptualization and more generally, to the study of race/ethnicity in America. For example, between 1980 and 2000, the Asian and Latino populations increased 204% and 142% respectively. Today, the U.S. population is roughly three-fourths non-Hispanic white, but Latinos, blacks, and Asians are expected to comprise the majority by the year 2042 (Brookings 2010). These changes have a number of important consequences for local politics. First, there have been important shifts in the distribution and diffusion of racial minorities across regions and cities of different sizes. And second, the growth of Latino and Asian populations has led to profound changes within cities, both in terms of composition and concentration of populations.

### 1.1. The Growth and Shift in Biracial/Ethnic Places

As the U.S. population becomes increasingly multiracial/ethnic, to what extent are cities, towns, and suburbs reflecting this change? Historically, minority populations have exhibited strong regional concentrations: blacks in the South, Asians in the West, and Latinos in the Southwest. By 2000, however, each group had made considerable inroads in every region of the U.S. To what extent are these groups concentrated in cities within these regions and has this shifted over time? The answer to this question has important implications for descriptive representation across place and time and also provides the backdrop for understanding one critical facet of racial/ethnic politics in American cities and towns: majority voting strength (i.e., politics in local jurisdictions where one racial or ethnic group comprises at least 50% of the population).

While the greater part of cities in the U.S. have been and continue to be comprised of predominantly white residents, the past three decades have witnessed an overall increase in both the depth and breadth of predominantly black and Latino cities. The total number of majority black cities increased from 714 to 1,026 between 1980 and 2000. While majority black cities are concentrated in the South (85% or 636 of 714 in 1980 and 881 of 1,026 in 2000), regions outside the South have witnessed the largest gains over the past three decades. The Midwest in particular saw strong growth, increasing over 100% between 1980 and 2000 (from 49 to 108 majority black places).

Yet this growth seems modest in comparison to that of Latino-dominant cities, which increased from 289 in 1980 to 416 in 1990 to 825 in 2000. Before 2000, the majority of Latino-dominant cities were located in the West (56% or 123 of 289 in 1980 and 55% or 229 of 416 in 1990); by 2000, however, the South housed the majority of cities with Latino populations greater than 50% (52% or 430 of 825). In 1980, there were no majority Asian cities in the continental U.S., but by 2000 Asians were the majority in seven cities—six in California, and one in Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to regional variation in the overall growth of biracial cities, there are also interesting distinctions in population distributions by city size. First, although blacks and Latinos are found in greatest numbers in big cities (populations greater than 250,000), they have made the largest inroads in small cities (less than 25,000 people): in 2000, 93% of majority black places (955 of 1,026) and 89% of majority Latino places (736 of 825) were small cities. Second, over time, the steepest increases occurred in medium-sized cities (between 25,000 and 250,000 people): a two-fold increase in majority black places (from 29 in 1980 to 62 in 2000), and a four-fold increase in majority Latinos places (22 in 1980 to 84 in 2000).

2. In California: Walnut City, Milpitas City, Monterey Park City, Rowland Heights, Cerritos City, and Daly City; in Pennsylvania: Millbourne Borough.

### 1.2. The Rise of Multiracial Cities

Given the historical differences in settlement patterns for blacks, Latinos, and Asians, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of places with sizeable minority populations have been biracial. The influx of Latinos, particularly in southern states with large black populations, has changed this pattern, and has resulted in the rise of truly multiracial cities. Conceptions of multiracial cities vary, but from a political perspective, we believe cities where multiple groups reside but where none constitutes a majority is a particularly apt definition since it implies that no racial or ethnic group is large enough to rely solely on its own population to sway electoral politics.

Using this definition, tables 1 and 2 display the growth of multiracial places over time by average population size and region, and highlight a number of salient features of these cities. First, the total number of multiracial cities has increased almost fourfold in the span of 20 years, from 167 in 1980 to 601 in 2000. The composition of these cities has also been in flux, with white and black population shares decreasing between 1980 and 2000 and average Latino and Asian population shares increasing. Second, each region of the U.S. witnessed an increase in the number of multiracial places, with the most dramatic growth in the South and West. Within these regions however, multiracial cities are generally confined to a few states, including Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, New York, and New Jersey. Lastly, while these places include some of the largest U.S. cities—New York, Chicago, Houston—the vast majority (69%) are small cities (populations less than 25,000), such as Crescent City, FL; Omega, GA; and Ossining, NY.

### 1.3. Changes in Segregation Patterns

Equally central to the study of cities is the concentration and dispersion of racial and ethnic groups within cities. The extent and nature of racial/ethnic segregation within local jurisdictions have critical implications for a whole range of phenomena,

Table 1. Average Percent of Population, by Race, for Multiracial Cities, 1980–2000

	1980	1990	2000
Percent white	44.7	43.5	41.5
Percent black	30.1	24.3	24.3
Percent Latino	19.4	22.9	25.2
Percent Asian	3.7	7.2	5.8
Number of cities	167	280	601

Source: US Census Summary 3 File, 1980, 1990, 2000.

Table 2. Regional Distribution of Multiracial Cities, 1980–2000

	1980	1990	2000
North	15	34	68
Midwest	9	11	29
South	94	132	332
West	49	103	172
Number of cities	167	280	601

Source: US Census Summary 3 File, 1980, 1990, 2000.

including minority candidate emergence in local elections, the formation or alteration of racial attitudes, stereotypes, and political orientations, and the distribution and quality of local public goods and services.

Analyses of the 1980–2000 censuses generally suggest that whereas residential segregation has declined for blacks (who nevertheless remain the most segregated group), it has been on the rise for both Asians and Latinos (Fischer et al. 2004; Iceland et al. 2002; Logan et al. 2004). Studies find that the decline in black-white segregation is usually found in multiracial cities or in cities with smaller proportions of blacks, and that the movement of Asians and Latinos into predominantly black-white places does little to change black-white segregation patterns (Logan et al. 2004). Segregation for Latinos and Asians is greatest in places where they comprise a large proportion of the population (Frey and Farley 1996; Logan et al. 2004; Johnston et al. 2006). Research on these groups also finds that the foreign-born are more segregated than their native-born counterparts (Iceland and Scopilliti 2008).

Although studies have done a relatively good job describing segregation patterns of particular groups (primarily *vis-à-vis* whites), far less is known about how shifts in city or neighborhood racial/ethnic composition affect segregation patterns among all groups (but see Logan & Zhang 2010; Pais et al. 2009). Thus, additional work on segregation patterns in multiracial cities is needed, as is research investigating how increases in Latino and Asian populations affect their residential segregation both within and across cities. Finally, we know almost nothing about patterns of segregation in smaller places.

To sum, a number of forces have transformed the racial and ethnic landscape of the U.S. since the 1980s. Latinos and Asians have made significant gains in the overall population, multiracial/ethnic places are on the rise, and segregation patterns within and across cities are in flux. Shifts in the size and geographic concentration of minority populations have important implications and consequences for the study of race and politics. In the following sections, we examine three primary areas of inquiry, focusing on how these new racial and ethnic paradigms challenge extant theories and models.

## 2. MINORITY CANDIDATES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS IN LOCAL POLITICS

At the heart of research investigating minority representation in local elections and politics is the question of what factors contribute to success. Researchers have tended to examine this question in the context of either local legislatures (city councils or school boards) or executives (mayors). Consequently this work has developed along somewhat different trajectories. In the case of councils and school boards, studies typically involve cross-sectional analyses that rely on relatively large samples. These studies have focused on descriptive representation and have paid particular attention to the ways in which electoral arrangements facilitate or inhibit the proportional representation of minorities in local legislatures. While much of this research concludes that single member districts (SMD) are most efficacious in translating minority votes into minority seats (Engstrom and McDonald 1981; Karnig and Welch 1982; Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010; Robinson and Dye 1978; Taebel 1978; Bullock and MacManus 1987; Zax 1990; Welch 1990), studies have also shown that blacks in particular have made considerable progress in multimember or at-large (AL) systems (Sass and Mehay 1995; Sass and Pitman 2000; but see Marschall et al. 2010).

On the other hand, research on minority mayors most typically involves case studies of big-city mayoral elections or the political experiences and governing styles of big-city mayors (Arday and Nelson 1990; Colburn and Adler 2001; Hahn and Almy 1971; Kaufmann 1998; Munoz and Henry 1986; Perry 1990; Preston 1987; Sheffield and Hadley 1984; Sonehshein 1986; Summers and Klinkner 1990; but see Marschall and Ruhil 2006). This area of inquiry focuses explicitly on elections (rather than officeholding or representation) and employs a relatively expansive analytic lens. Examining campaign and candidate attributes as well as the broader historical, political, and economic context in which mayoral elections take place, this body of work seeks to explain who votes for, and more specifically, which groups are pivotal in the electoral success of minority candidates.

Although research on legislative versus executive representation relies on different data and methods, and approaches its subject from alternative theoretical lenses, it shares a number of commonalities as well. First, the vast majority of research on mayoral candidates and legislative officeholding has focused on large U.S. cities. A second common feature is the tendency of scholarly work to examine the electoral and representational experiences of a single group, in most cases African Americans, rather than comparing experiences across groups. Third, only occasionally, and typically in only a limited fashion, has research on minority mayors or local legislators attempted to explain changes in electoral fortunes or minority officeholding over time. Finally, whether it is the mayor's office, city council, or school board seats, studies have consistently found the relative size of the minority population

and racial bloc voting to be the most powerful explanations for minority electoral success (Bullock and Campbell 1984; Murray and Vedlitz 1978; Engstrom and McDonald 1981; 1982; Karnig and Welch 1982; Robinson and Dye 1978; Taebel 1978; Bullock and MacManus 1987; Zax 1990; Welch 1990; Sass and Mahay 1995; Sass and Pittman 2000).

Though this body of work has contributed significantly to our understanding of minority officeholding in local politics, a number of questions have nevertheless been largely overlooked. And, whereas this oversight was somewhat unavoidable in the past given data limitations and the predominantly biracial (black-white) context of the cities where minorities historically lived, this is no longer the case. Indeed, as the demographic trends outlined in the previous section make clear, it is imperative that future research attends more vigorously to the places where minorities (blacks, Latinos, and Asians) live and are concentrated today. This means shifting attention from large urban centers to suburbs and smaller towns, and developing better tools to measure within-city racial/ethnic characteristics. In addition, future studies need to develop new theoretical and empirical approaches to study multiracial places and multigroup outcomes. For example, rather than looking exclusively at the number of legislative seats held by one group in isolation, studies should also analyze the racial/ethnic composition of the legislature as a whole (see e.g., Grimmer and Nall 2009). Finally, scholars need to focus more energy and attention on understanding and explaining changes in minority electoral fortunes and representation over time.

## 2.1. Patterns of Black versus Latino Council Representation

In tables 3 and 4 we report data from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) showing black and Latino representation on city councils by city size for the first and most recent year this organization conducted surveys of municipal governments in the U.S. (1981 and 2006).<sup>3</sup> As these data illustrate, when looking at the total number of black and Latino councilors, the vast majority are found in the smallest U.S. cities. On the other hand, small cities are also most likely to have no Latinos or blacks serving on their councils. This seemingly contradictory pattern is explained by the large number of cities with populations under 25,000 in the ICMA sample (and U.S. more generally). Yet, these patterns highlight two important questions that remain largely unexamined by urban politics scholars. First, what explains minority representation in these smaller U.S. cities and do models developed and tested for the largest U.S. cities explain Latino and black officeholding in these more typical localities? Second, to what extent is the absence

3. Asian American representation is not included here due the very small number of councilors reported in the ICMA data (45 in 1981 and 95 in 2006). Even across all municipalities, their numbers remain small: 332 in 2000 according to the Gender and Multicultural Leadership Project ([www.gmcl.org](http://www.gmcl.org)).

**Table 3. African Americans Serving on City Councils by City Size, 1981 and 2006**

City size	1981		2006	
	Total	Pct of all blacks	Total	Pct of all blacks
<25,000	543	54.4	830	64.7
25-69,999	203	20.3	241	18.8
70-199,999	134	13.4	127	9.9
>200,000	118	11.8	85	6.6
Total	998	100	1,283	100

Source: ICMA 1981, 2006.

**Table 4. Latinos Serving on City Councils by City Size, 1981 and 2006**

city size	1981		2006	
	Total	Pct of all Latinos	Total	Pct of all Latinos
<25,000	259	67.8	454	66.3
25-69,999	59	15.4	109	15.9
70-199,999	39	10.2	85	12.4
>200,000	25	6.5	37	5.4
Total	382	100	685	100

Source: International City/County Manager Association (ICMA), *Form of Government Surveys*, 1981, 2006.

of Latino and black council representation a function of supply: that is, minority candidates not running for local office in these jurisdictions?

The data in tables 3 and 4 also highlight some important differences across groups and underscore the value of more focused cross-group analyses. In particular, changes in black and Latino council representation over time exhibit quite different patterns, with the strongest black gains occurring in the smallest localities (an increase of over 50%) and decreases occurring in medium and large cities, and Latinos witnessing gains across cities of all sizes with roughly the same percent changes. A second noteworthy difference across groups relates to the percentage of cities with no minority elected councilors. For blacks, the likelihood of observing no councilors decreases steadily as the size of the city increases. Indeed, in the largest U.S. cities, only about a fifth of cities have no blacks on their councils. Further, the pattern is nearly identical for both 1981 and 2006. For Latinos, the likelihood of observing no council representation is much greater across all city sizes and

remains high even in the largest cities (75% in 1981). By 2006, observing Latino elected councilors was still a rare event; however, the percentage of cities with no Latino councilors had decreased considerably—a trend not observed for blacks. A third question then, is what accounts for the formidable hurdle in minority officeholding on local councils and why is this hurdle substantially greater for Latinos? Finally, have the inroads Latinos made in big cities come at the expense of black representation?

## 2.2. Accounting for Gains in Minority Representation

Despite the substantial gains blacks and Latinos have made in local officeholding since passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, very little research has systematically examined the factors contributing to these gains or even where these gains have been strongest (Marschall et al. 2010; Sass and Mehay 1995; Sass and Pitman 2000; Trounstine and Valdini 2008). Moreover, the most reliable variable linked to representation, minority population size, cannot account for these increases. For example, between 1984 and 2000, black and Latino representation in municipal offices increased at almost identical rates (49.3% versus 48.7%). The number of blacks holding municipal offices increased from 2,735 (including 255 mayors) to 4,083 (451 mayors) and the number of Latinos grew from 987 (including 142 mayors) to 1,468 (including 213 mayors) (NALEO and Joint Center, various years). Yet between 1980 and 2000, the black population increased just 30% (from 26.1 million to 33.9 million), whereas the Latino population grew 142% (from 14.6 million to 35.3 million) (U.S. Census Bureau 2008).

Beyond simply the size of the minority population (and preferably, the eligible, voting age population) we need to know how the population is *concentrated*. And, since electoral arrangements play a critical role in determining whether and how minority voting strength is concentrated, these must be considered too. While a handful of studies have attempted to investigate the efficacy of district (SMD) versus at-large (AL) electoral systems on legislative officeholding over time, it is not clear what to make of their findings given limitations of the data and methods employed. In particular, most studies have untenably used the ICMA's *Form of Government Survey* as panel data to make inferences about changes in this relationship overtime (see e.g., Sass and Pitman 2000; Trounstine and Valdini 2008). And, even studies employing a constant sample of cities (Marschall et al. 2010) continue to measure minority voting strength exclusively at the city-level regardless of whether councilors are elected citywide or by district. This inability to accurately or reliably measure how and where minority voting strength is concentrated means that to date, our understanding of how electoral structures influence minority electoral success and representation is not only incomplete, but potentially biased. Thus, future research must address this fundamental problem and employ proximate (i.e., district-level) indicators that measure the distribution and concentration of minority residents within the city.

## 2.3. Election, Voting, and Representation in Multiracial Contexts

Lastly, urban scholarship has centered on the question of who votes for, and more specifically, which groups are pivotal in the electoral success of minority candidates. This body of work is based almost entirely on black mayors, although a smaller body of literature has focused on Latino mayors (Baretto 2007; Baretto, Villarreal, and Woods 2005; Hero and Beatty 1989; Hill et al. 2001). For both blacks and Latinos, the earliest mayors emerged in predominantly minority cities. Browning et al. (1984) argued for the possibility of "rainbow coalitions" or the courting of "crossover" voters (including other minority groups and liberal whites) in places where the minority population constituted less than a majority, but to date empirical tests of this thesis have been mixed (e.g., Rocha 2007; Marschall and Ruhil 2006). In the context of legislative representation, Marschall et al. (2010) and Shah (2010) find blacks and Latinos are more likely to work together to get a single minority elected, but are far less likely to cooperate once that seat has been filled.

The rise of multiracial places, coupled with success of black mayors in these places (Marschall and Ruhil 2006) (see figure 1), underscores the need for further examination of "crossover" voting and the building of theories that move beyond racialized voting. For one, the ways in which past experience with minority representation shapes future representation have not been sufficiently addressed. In part, an overreliance on cross-sectional data means we know little of how the election of a black mayor at one point in time impacts the likelihood of electing either another black mayor or a Latino mayor at a future date.

Second, while the election (and in most cases, reelection) of a single minority mayor in cities where blacks or Latinos do not comprise an electoral majority appears to be the rule (e.g., David Dinkins in New York, Harold Washington in Chicago, Lee Brown in Houston, Ron Kirk in Dallas, Tom Bradley in Los Angeles,

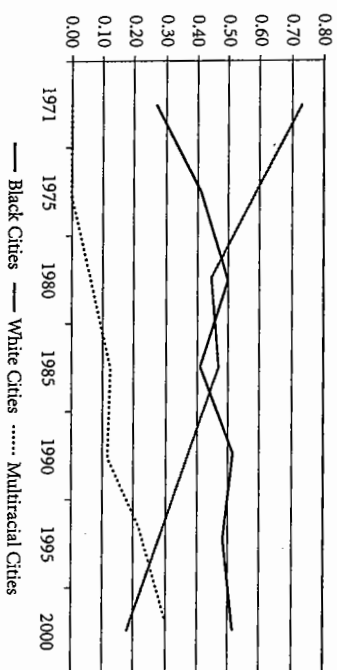


Figure 16.1. Proportion of All Black Mayors by City Type, 1975–2000  
Based on a sample of 309 cities, see Marschall and Ruhil (2006) for more details.

Sharon Sayles Belton in Minneapolis, Rice Norman in Seattle, Willie Brown in San Francisco), some cities have elected multiple black or Latino mayors (Wilson Goode and John Street in Philadelphia, James McGee and Richard Dixon in Dayton, OH), or in rare cases, one of each (Wellington Webb and Federico Pena in Denver, Tom Bradley and Antonio Villaraigosa in Los Angeles). What explains this? Is it greater acceptance and support among white voters as Hainal's (2007) information theory might suggest? Is the incidence of multiple minority mayors a function of more liberal electorates or an institutionalized bi- or multiracial electoral coalition?

Finally, we are ill equipped to answer questions about the supply side of minority candidates in local elections. At the most basic level, the question of whether minorities are underrepresented because they are not running or not winning remains completely unaddressed. And, as the U.S. becomes increasingly multiracial, understanding what happens when multiple racial/ethnic candidates run against one another is ever more pressing. These and other questions can be fruitfully explored at the local level now, providing both critical insights about how race and ethnic politics shape local elections and officeholding, and a foundation for study-state and federal elections in the future.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS OF MINORITY OFFICEHOLDING IN LOCAL POLITICS

Beyond the question of whether and how minorities are represented in local politics and government is the more substantive matter of whether it makes a difference. In other words, do blacks, Latinos, and Asians need black, Latino, or Asian elected officials to represent their interests or are nonminority representatives just as effective in serving these constituencies? To date, political scientists have examined the implications of minority descriptive representation by documenting the value of symbolic representation or recording the substantive benefits emanating from a particular office. Research on symbolic representation builds on theoretical insights from political and social psychology (Abramson 1983; Gilliam 1996; Bobo and Gilliam 1990), including work on procedural justice (Lind and Tyler 1988; Thibaut and Walker 1975). This work focuses on the individual and examines the psychic and behavioral effects of representation, irrespective of whether representatives are actually responsive to the constituents they serve (Eulau and Karp 1977). On the other hand, research examining substantive representation builds more directly on work in urban politics and public administration, particularly service delivery, and tends to take a more macro-level approach.

While a number of studies find empirical evidence consistent with the symbolic representation model for African Americans (Abney and Hutcheson 1981; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Howell and Fagan 1988) and Latinos (Shah 2009), important

questions remain. In the first place, most analyses have focused on within-group effects, and have neglected causal relationships among and between groups. Consequently, we know much less about how black elected officials impact levels of trust and political efficacy among nonblack constituents and vice versa. Such questions are increasingly salient given the rise of multiracial places, and are particularly important in the context of new immigrant destinations in the South—places that have witnessed dramatic growth in their foreign-born populations (see e.g. Singer 2004)—where the likelihood of Latinos confronting black leadership is high. A second set of questions entails the relationship between symbolic and substantive representation. To what extent are these separate phenomena? Can these effects be isolated from one another, and if so, how can we design empirical tests to best assess this? Several recent studies suggest that symbolic effects of minority representation may be fleeting (Spence, McClerking, and Brown 2009) or present only in when improvements in local services are conspicuous (Marschall and Ruhl 2007; Marschall and Shah 2007).

Beyond symbolic effects, studies have tended to find substantive outcomes originating from minority representation. Focusing on minority mayors, research finds positive effects on the racial/ethnic composition of the municipal workforce (Eisinger 1982; Mladenka 1989; Stein 1986; Stein and Condey 1987), the distribution of government expenditures and public services (Karnig and Welch 1980; but see also Pelissero et al. 2000), and the share of city contracts granted to minority business owners (Jones 1978; Nelson 1987; MacMannus 1990). Other research has attempted to document the substantive effects of minority representation in specific policy arenas where minority policy preferences or a minority policy agenda are most discernible. Two policy areas that have featured most prominently in this research include public schooling (Fraga et al. 1986; Meier and England 1984; Polinard et al. 1990; Polinard et al. 1995), and policing and public safety (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Saltzstein 1989).

A particular challenge in all research on substantive representation is identifying a set of policy preferences that is unique or at least more strongly held by the specific group in question (as compared to other racial/ethnic groups). In other words, can policy preferences really be defined along racial/ethnic lines (independent of socioeconomic status, neighborhood location, or partisanship) and if so, for which policies are these preferences most starkly differentiated? Even when this can be done, the case must be made that such preferences are stable and consistently held by minority communities across cities that may differ in a number of important respects.

For example, expectations about and realities of public services in small cities versus large cities or racially homogeneous versus heterogeneous cities might be quite disparate. Consequently, we may need different methodological approaches and conceptions of substantive representation depending on the type of local jurisdiction in question. And, since services are delivered in a very localized manner, it is incumbent that future studies begin to look at disaggregated indicators of service provision and/or quality. Doing this will require multilevel and ideally, geocoded

data, as well as analytic methods appropriate for these relatively complex data and relationships. Finally, it will also require attention to the capacity of local elected officials to act in ways consistent with the policy preferences and expectations of their constituents. As other studies have shown (Salzstein 1989; Spence et al. 2009), constraints on minority mayors (or other elected officials) may prevent them from acting upon the policy preferences of their core constituents, and lead them to define their representational roles in more complex terms.

#### 4. RACE AND PLACE: THE INFLUENCE OF CONTEXT ON RACIAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

Perhaps the most fundamental way in which the racial and ethnic features of local jurisdictions shape local politics is via their effects on individual attitudes and behaviors. Indeed, the racial and ethnic context of neighborhoods and cities plays an important role in shaping the way individuals understand both their own racial/ethnic identities and those of others (see e.g. Key 1949). Because these understandings have important implications for how local residents engage in political and civic life, political scientists have devoted considerable attention to understanding how racial and other contextual features of local places operate on the development of individual-level attitudes and behaviors.

As with research on minority representation in local elections and politics, most of the work examining how race/ethnicity and place intersect has focused on black-white relationships, looking only occasionally at how Latinos and Asians fit into existing theories and models. Furthermore, much of this work, particularly with regard to attitudes, focuses on unidimensional changes in the racial/ethnic context. In other words, how do increases in the size of one racial group (e.g., blacks) affect the attitudes of individuals from a different racial group (e.g., whites)?<sup>4</sup> What these studies tend to find is that whereas whites living in contexts with more blacks exhibit increasing racial hostility and prejudice toward blacks (Fosset and Kiecolt 1989; Giles 1977; Giles and Hertz 1994; Glaser 1994; Key 1949; Stein et al. 2000; Taylor 1998; Wright 1997), blacks living in contexts with larger concentrations of whites tend to develop lower levels of group solidarity and stronger attachments to whites and other groups in society (Petigrew 1998; Bledsoe et al. 1995).<sup>5</sup>

4. There is also a considerable body of work examining the behavioral effects of racial context (see e.g., Leighley 2001; Oliver 2010; Uslander and Brown 2005; Cho et al. 2006). Given space constraints and the fact that much of this literature focuses on electoral and political participation in presidential and other nonlocal contests, we largely omit it from this chapter.

5. More recent analyses suggest that other factors play a key role in conditioning the effects of racial context, namely the socioeconomic status of neighborhood or city

In examining the dynamic racial and ethnic changes taking place within and across U.S. cities, towns, and suburbs, a number of unanswered questions emerge. First, how do existing theories regarding the relationship between racial/ethnic context and individual attitudes and behaviors apply to Asians and Latinos? Latinos and Asians present a unique challenge because of within-group heterogeneity on a number of characteristics relating to racial attitudes (Kaufmann 2003; Frey 2001; Lai 2003). The racial heterogeneity of Latinos in particular means that in- and out-group orientations will vary significantly depending on racial identity and to a lesser extent, country of origin.<sup>6</sup> Based on the 2000 census, there are nearly one million black Hispanics in the U.S., and data suggest that black Hispanics have a socioeconomic profile much more similar to non-Hispanic blacks than to other Hispanic groups. For example, black Hispanics tend to live in neighborhoods with roughly the same number of black and Hispanic residents, and black Hispanic children tend to have a non-Hispanic black mother or father (Logan 2003). In addition to racial differences, ongoing immigration means there are important generational and linguistic differences within Asian and Latino groups, and these differences have important implications for how individuals within groups identify in- and out-groups (Oliver 2010; Ramakrishnan 2005).

The second unaddressed question focuses more specifically on the ways in which immigration shapes the effects of racial/ethnic context, particularly in light of the myriad and distinctive differences between traditional and new immigrant destinations. Again, this area of inquiry is particularly salient to Latino and Asian populations, which differ significantly in the extent, nature, and recency of their immigration. While scholars have begun to examine the implications of rapid growth in immigrant populations for both local politics and racial and political attitudes (Barreto et al. 2010; Fennelly 2008; Jones-Correa 2005; 2008; Kochar, Suro, and Tafuya 2005; McClain 1993; McClain et al. 2006; Oliver and Wong 2003; Rocha 2007) this work has only scratched the surface. How does the influx of a young, mainly Spanish speaking, population challenge the traditional black-white racial dynamics of many new destination places? Do behavioral and attitudinal effects of racial/ethnic context operate on local residents in communities that have undergone rapid racial/ethnic transformations in the same ways as in communities with long histories of foreign immigration or racial minorities?

Finally, a third set of questions deal more with methodological and conceptual issues than any one substantive area in particular. In the first place, empirical explorations of the racial threat and intergroup contact theories have primarily been conducted using survey data not necessarily collected with this purpose in mind. In particular, surveys typically have only a few respondents from any given city (let residents (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Oliver and Mendelberg 2000) and the extent of intergroup contact (Jackman and Crane 1986; Stein et al. 2000).

6. More Dominicans (12.7%) than any other group identified themselves as black in the 2000 census, followed by Puerto Ricans (8.2%) and Cubans (4.7%). Only 1.1% of Mexicans identified as black (Logan 2003).



alone neighborhood), thereby making it impossible to examine how residents within *the same city* (or neighborhood) are similarly or differentially affected by their racial/ethnic context.<sup>7</sup> Since the number of Latinos and Asians included in these samples tends to be relatively small, this data problem has especially important implications for studying how contextual effects operate on the attitudes and behaviors of Latinos and Asians.

Another vexing problem is how to best measure the concentration and dispersion of racial groups. What is the appropriate unit of analysis (e.g., city, census tract)? And, at what level does segregation impact attitudes and behaviors? How do we best capture the dynamics of multigroup segregation? Lastly, the "levels of analysis" problem goes beyond segregation and measurement issues. Majority/black cities may be conceptually different from majority black neighborhoods, or majority black suburbs. Put differently, how do size and other salient aspects of local jurisdictions (e.g., level and nature of service provision) intersect with racial/ethnic context? Again, given the dispersion of racial and ethnic minorities in small- and medium-sized places, the omission of these jurisdictions suggests our current understanding of the relationship between race and place is incomplete.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The increasing racial/ethnic heterogeneity of the U.S. population is perhaps nowhere more evident than at the local level, which means that American cities, towns, and neighborhoods continue to be the best arena for testing theories about the role of race/ethnicity in politics. In this chapter we surveyed but a few of these theories as we examined three prominent areas of inquiry in the fields of urban and racial politics—elections and officeholding, the implications of minority representation, and the role of racial/ethnic context on attitudes and behaviors. As we noted earlier, this is a large and diverse literature and we could hardly do justice to it in this essay. In addition, we highlighted how transformations in America's racial/ethnic landscape challenge current theories, conceptualizations, and findings, and identified a set of questions that we believe deserve greater attention. In this final section, we synthesize these ideas in order to outline an agenda for future research.

First, as we noted consistently in this chapter, current understandings of the interaction and implications of race and politics are too narrowly developed within the context of biracial settings (most often black-white) and large central cities. Given dramatic increases in foreign immigration over the past several decades and the fact that the majority of Americans now live in suburbs, future research needs to expand and modify existing theories and concepts in order to accommodate

these realities. The rise of multiracial/ethnic cities also suggests the need for more nuanced comparisons within and across different contexts. Beyond this, additional work that places the racial/ethnic transformations in American localities within a global context that seeks to compare these processes across countries is clearly needed. As many other chapters in the volume argue, a cross-national comparative framework is necessary as the processes of immigration and migration transform understandings of national identity and racial/ethnic consciousness across the globe.

Second, our ability to access, measure, and compile appropriate data has fallen behind theoretical and conceptual developments, limiting in many ways our ability to assess some of the most vital and pertinent questions about race/ethnicity and politics. The glaring omissions include data on Latinos and Asians and studies of small and middle-sized places. However, we are also in need of reliable and accurate information about the supply of minority candidates in elections, more proximate measures of the distribution and concentration of minority residents within cities, valid indicators of minority preferences for local services and policies, and comparable policy outputs/outcomes across multiple cities (and the neighborhoods within them). Conceptually and theoretically, we must continue to struggle with identifying the most relevant levels of analysis in examining the concepts of "context" and "place," entertaining the ways in which multiple contexts impose their effects independently and simultaneously. These types of inquiry will hopefully also lead to innovations in analytic methods (e.g., compositional data analysis, multilevel modeling, systematic content analysis, matching), and provide more leverage and enhanced validity to empirical tests of complex theories of racial and urban politics.

Lastly, is the question of change. To date, urban scholars have paid scant attention to the questions of transformations over time, most often because of data limitations. Yet the shifting racial/ethnic realities in U.S. cities and towns require models that both describe and explain change (i.e. increases in the number of minority representatives over time), and conceptualize change as an important variable in understanding current and future patterns (i.e. the effects of prior minority representation on likelihood of future representation). Thus, while the racial and ethnic changes taking place in American cities, towns, and suburbs over the last 30 years provide new challenges to scholarship, we have an opportunity to look back and examine these transformations through both historical and contemporary lenses, establishing a critical looking glass into the future of electoral processes and representative democracy in the U.S.

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## CHAPTER 17

# POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

## ROB ATKINSON AND TODD SWANSTROM

In this chapter we compare the scholarly research and policy approaches to poverty in the United States and western Europe. The United States has always had a culture of poverty approach, largely missing in Europe, that places more emphasis on individual striving and the voluntary institutions of civil society, instead of government, to address poverty. By contrast, the European discourse on poverty has always stressed the structural causes of poverty and the importance of the national welfare state. Since the 1970s, however, an interesting convergence has occurred as the discourse about poverty on both sides of the Atlantic has shifted from a focus on incomes to a focus on relationships, or what is termed social exclusion. Although the shift to social exclusion has expanded the research on poverty in fruitful directions, we argue that the impact on policy has been less profound, partly because it is so difficult to measure. Moreover, the contested nature of the concept of social exclusion has often obscured the hard political choices that need to be made to reduce poverty.

### 1. WHY CONCEPTS AND RESEARCH MATTER FOR POVERTY POLICY

A concern with and debates over poverty are by no means new; in Europe one can trace a concern with poverty back at least to the UK's Elizabethan Poor Laws<sup>1</sup> and while the emergence of social/inclusion exclusion is more recent, arguably originat-

1. Although one should note that a concern with addressing poverty through forms of charitable action has existed for much longer in the major world religions—e.g.,