

Racial Diversity and Public Policy in the States: Electoral Constraint or Backlash?*

Tetsuya Matsubayashi[†]

Rene Rocha[‡]

March 12, 2008

Abstract

This paper examines the way in which minority group size within the political and socio-economic environment influences public policy outputs at the state-level. By contrasting works on the effect of racial diversity on mass preferences and the behavior of elected representatives, we develop two conflicting explanations of how minority group size influences the likelihood that states will enact liberal policies which are explicitly or implicitly racialized. The electoral constraint hypothesis argues that minority group size works to limit the extent to which conservative legislators will be willing to pursue policies which are antagonistic to minority interests. However, the white backlash hypothesis suggests that states with large minority populations will also be characterized by negative racial attitudes and thus be more likely to enact anti-minority policies. We reconcile these competing explanations into a single hypothesis by arguing that the negative impact of minority population size on substantive representation is moderated by the amount of electoral pressure that minority groups impose on legislators. This hypothesis is tested using a time-series cross-sectional dataset of state outputs within two policy domains.

*We would like to thank Jun-deh Wu for his research assistance.

[†]University of North Texas. tmatsubayashi@unt.edu

[‡]University of Iowa. rene-rocha@uiowa.edu

The political implications of racial diversity within the United States are numerous and well documented. Studies suggest that diverse environments alter mass policy preferences, partisan attachments, and rates of political participation (Giles and Hertz, 1994; Glaser, 1994; Leighley, 2001; Oliver, 2001). Unfortunately, we know less about how racial diversity affects public policy formation.

As minorities have gained access to elected office with greater regularity over the past few decades, many expected significant changes in the degree to which minority-interests were represented within the policymaking process. The failure of scholars to find consistent evidence in support of this expectation remains one of major dilemmas within the literature on minority representation. Scholars have presented a series of logical, empirically supported arguments explaining why descriptive representation may not translate into substantive representation at the federal level (see Lublin, 1997). However, for reasons we detail below, their argument fails to explain this phenomenon at the sub-national level.

By contrasting works on the effect of racial diversity on mass preferences and the behavior of elected representatives, we develop two conflicting explanations of how minority group size influences the likelihood that states will enact liberal policies which are explicitly or implicitly racialized. The electoral constraint hypothesis argues that minority group size works to limit the extent to which conservative legislators will be willing to pursue policies that are antagonistic to minority interests (Yates and Fording, 2005). The policy backlash hypothesis suggests states with large minority populations are characterized by negative racial attitudes and thus more likely to enact anti-minority policies (Preuhs, 2007).

We reconcile these competing explanations into a single hypothesis by arguing that the negative impact of minority population size on substantive representation is moderated by the amount of electoral pressure that minority groups impose on legislators. This hypothesis is tested using a time-series cross-sectional dataset of state outputs within two policy domains. Our findings show that socioeconomic conditions and electoral rules condition the linkage between the minority populations and government expenditures: the negative effect of minority population is weaker in states with higher income equality and more restrictive voter registration laws.

Race and Public Policy in the States

Previous works offer mixed evidence regarding the relationship between minority group size and public policy in the states. Yates and Fording (2005) find that Republican control of state government is associated with inequitable racial policy outcomes. However, the magnitude of this association is lessened in states with large Black populations, implying Blacks in those states serve as an electoral constraint on both Democratic and Republican representatives. Hero's (1998, 2007) work similarly shows that more diverse states are characterized by greater levels of racial policy equity.

This argument corresponds with what we know about the behavior of representatives in Congress. Swain (1993) suggests that the increased descriptive representation of minorities in Congress which occurred in the years following the Voting Rights Act did not produce an increase in the substantive representation of minorities because minority constituents were removed from districts represented by non-minority members. This undercut any electoral incentive for non-minority legislators to represent minority interests.

Lublin (1997) demonstrates that the voting patterns of House members become increasingly liberal as Blacks make up a larger proportion of their constituency. Although Cannon (1999) finds less consistent evidence regarding the relationship between minority group size and the roll call voting behavior of House members, he does find that representatives of districts with large Black populations are more like to cosponsor legislation and give floor speeches on racial issues. Together, these works present a convincing case that large minority populations serve as an electoral constraint on representatives regardless of partisanship. Representatives stand as advocates for the policy preferences held by their constituencies and as minorities make up a larger share of their constituency, representatives are apt to adopt racially liberal policy positions.

This argument, however, does not offer an explanation as to why states legislatures in which minorities enjoy considerable descriptive representation are not more likely to enact minority-interest legislation. In racially diverse or bifurcated states where districts are racially gerrymandered, minority legislators are likely representing districts with large minority populations while non-minority legislators are likely representing predominately White districts. While such a state legislature may be less likely to enact minority-interest legislation than a state with the same demographic makeup but whose minority population is more evenly

disposed among districts, it should still be more likely (or at least not less likely) to enact minority-interest legislation than a racial homogenous state where minorities lack both descriptive representation and electoral clout. In short, the electoral constraint argument cannot explain why states with large minority populations are not more likely, and perhaps are less likely, to adopt minority-interest legislation.

One shortcoming of the electoral constraint hypothesis is its assumption that the policy preferences of non-minorities do not change with the size of the minority population, an assumption which conflicts with the expectations of the power-threat or backlash hypothesis. Put simply, the power-threat hypothesis states that a “superordinate group (e.g. Whites) becomes more racially hostile as the size of the proximate subordinate group increases, which punitively threatens the former’s economic and social privilege” (Oliver and Wong, 2003, 568). Racial hostility may manifest itself in numerous ways, such as expressions of racial prejudice and an increased tendency to oppose racially liberal public policies. Thus, although the representatives with large minority constituencies have an obvious incentive to support racial liberal policies, the non-minority segment of their constituency is more likely to oppose such policies and therefore reduces the incentive which large minority group size produces.

While studies of roll call voting behavior among members of Congress suggest the opposite, analyzes of minority population size and representation at the state level lend some support to the backlash argument (Fellowes and Rowe, 2004; Soss et al., 2001). A recent study by Preuhs (2007) also finds that states with larger Latino populations tend to have less generous welfare policies. However, Preuhs (2007) is also careful to acknowledge that minority population size may appear to be positively related to liberal policy outputs at the state level, but only because population size indirectly affects policy outputs through its association with descriptive representation. That is, states with large minority populations also have a significant number of minorities serving the state legislatures. As the number of minorities serving in state legislatures increases so may the tendency of states to enact racially liberal policies. Once he controls for the level of descriptive representation within the legislature, Preuhs (2007) finds that the size of the Latino population within a state is negatively associated with welfare generosity.

The racial backlash hypothesis may also explain the null relationship Nelson (1991) finds between the descriptive and the substantive representation of minorities at the state level. In accordance with studies of minority representation in Congress (Canon, 1999), minority state

legislators are significantly more likely to sponsor minority-interest legislation (Bratton and Haynie, 1999; Haynie, 2001). Thus, a null relationship is unlikely to be a product of minority representatives choosing not to advocate minority interests.

Conflicting findings regarding the relationship between minority group size and substantive representation in the states indicates the underlying causal mechanism is more complicated than previous works have thought. We attempt to reconcile competing arguments into a single theory in which the effect of White backlash on substantive representation is determined by the size of electoral constraint that minority citizens exert in the legislative process. Specifically, we first argue that greater minority group size is associated with less liberal policies given the numerical dominance of Anglo-Whites in most of the states. In other words, the backlash hypothesis is the default explanation for the linkage between a minority population size and policy outcomes at the state level. We then suggest that the negative impact of minority group size is contingent upon the electoral power the minority population possesses. When minority groups effectively translate their preferences into legislative power through electoral processes, the negative effect of their size on substantive representation is moderated and becomes weaker. When minority groups do not have significant electoral influence, the negative effect of their size is enhanced and becomes stronger. This conditional relationship is summarized in Figure 1.

[Figure 1 Here]

We focus on three environmental attributes of states that determine the relative size of minority electoral power: the presence of significant institutional barriers to political participation, the socioeconomic conditions within racial/ethnic communities, and the achievement of descriptive representation.

Voter Registration Laws

Previous research on the subject of political participation indicates that voter registration laws are a significant determinant of the probability that citizens turn out on election day in the United States (e.g. Powell, 1986). More restrictive registration laws are associated with a lower rate of voter turnout. Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) further argue that the dissuading impact of restrictive registration laws on voter turnout is more pervasive for those who are less educated and affluent because institutional barriers increase the cost of voting above the threshold of those who have fewer resources. This argument leads us to expect that

less restrictive registration laws boost voting participation especially among the disadvantaged and in turn move the location of the median voter to the liberal end. Because minority citizens are more likely to be socially and economically disadvantaged, we expect that less restrictive registration laws also encourage their voting participation and enhance electoral power. This expectation is consistent with Husted and Kenny's (1997) finding that the expansion of the voting rights to African-Americans in the 1960s and 1970s was associated with a growth in general government expenditures and welfare expenditures. Thus, we hypothesize that the negative impact of minority population size is moderated in states with a less restrictive registration laws.

An alternative expectation can be drawn from research following Wolfinger and Rosenstone's seminal work. Nagler (1991) finds no difference in the impact of registration laws on people with different levels of education and concludes that Wolfinger and Rosenstone's finding is a statistical artifact. Highton and Wolfinger (1998) found that those with moderate amounts of education (e.g. with a higher school degree or some college education) are the most likely to be affected by the removal of restrictive registration laws, while Wolfinger, Wolfinger and Hoffman (2001) report that Blacks and Latinos are less likely to take advantage of the voter motor registration act. Related, Oliver (1996) shows that the introduction of mail voting has the largest impact on voting among advantaged individuals. To summarize, recent works suggest that less restrictive registration laws are more likely to benefit the socially and economically advantaged and in turn move the location of the median voter to the conservative end. In other words, less restrictive registration laws encourage the majority to vote, while they have no strong impact on the participation of minority groups. An alternative hypothesis, therefore, is that the negative impact of minority population size is stronger in states with a less restrictive registration system than in states with a more restrictive system.

Socioeconomic Conditions

Under the electoral constraint scenario, legislators are thought to be responsive to minorities within their districts because they fear electoral repercussions if they do otherwise. Of course, scholars have long noted that all individuals are not equally like to vote or otherwise participate in politics (Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995). African-Americans and Latinos are significantly less likely to participate in politics; however lower rates of participation among African-Americans are primarily the product of class. Controlling

for socioeconomic status, African-Americans turn out to be no less likely than Whites to participate in most forms electoral activities, including voting. If legislators are aware of the differential likelihood of participation for constituents based upon socioeconomic resources, we would expect African-Americans to have the greatest level of influence when their median level of income is on par with, or perhaps greater than, the local Anglo community. In areas where there is large disparity between the amount of income earned by the typical African-American or Latino household relative to the typical Anglo household, we would expect the political clout which large population size offers minorities to be muted.

Disparities in the socioeconomic status of minorities relative to Anglos are also critical to the causal mechanism articulated by the threat scenario. Again, the threat hypothesis argues that Anglos will develop anti-minority policy preferences when they reside in jurisdictions with large minority populations. The literature on racial context and political behavior has long noted a conflict between this argument and the social contact hypothesis, which argues that racial tensions decline as direct contact between Whites and minority group members increases (Allport, 1979 [1954]; Ellison and Powers, 1994; Forbes, 1997; Rocha and Espino, 2008; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Welch and Sigelman, 2000). While typically portrayed as contradictory hypotheses (Stein, Post and Rinden, 2000), Allport (1979 [1954], 276) is careful to argue that social contact only reduces racial tensions when it occurs between individuals of equal status. Branton and Jones (2005) offer empirical support for the contention that the relationship between racial context and racial attitudes is conditioned by socioeconomic context. Since social contact is more likely in areas of large minority group size, it is likely to serve as a corrective for the dynamic which threat produces, but only in certain socioeconomic contexts. Accordingly, in areas where racial/ethnic groups enjoy socioeconomic parity, Anglos are not more likely to possess racially conservative policy preferences, removing the incentive for legislators to oppose racial liberal policies.

Descriptive Representation

The electoral power of minority groups is most directly evaluated by the degree of descriptive representation in the states. When the size of minority groups is proportionally reflected in the amount of descriptive representation they hold in the state legislature, we can conclude that policy preferences of minority groups will be effectively translated into the legislative process and thus that their electoral power moderates the impact of White backlash on policy outputs.

When the number of minority legislators is small relative to the size of minority population in a state, the impact of White backlash remains to strong and negatively affects the substantive representation of minorities. Thus our hypothesis is that the negative impact of minority population size is moderated in states with a higher percentage of African-American or Latino legislators in the states.

Data and Method

We employ a pooled time-series cross-sectional design in order to examine competing explanations of how race influences public policy in the states for the years 1980-2000. Studies of racial/ethnic politics at the state level conceptualize substantive representation in a number of ways. Typically, scholars isolate one or a small number of policy domains for which preferences are thought to differ by race/ethnicity or that tend to disproportionately impact minority communities (Haynie, 2001; Hero, 1998; Preuhs, 2006, 2007; Yates and Fording, 2005). For example, several works point to the racialization of welfare policy in the US (Johnson, 2001; Preuhs, 2006, 2007). Minorities typically favor high levels of welfare generosity, while Anglos tend to support less government spending on such programs. Although the literature finds mixed evidence for the contention that increased welfare generosity reduces poverty, Fording and Berry (2007) argue that this inconsistency is partially a product of the way in which welfare benefits are allocated and poverty rates are calculated. Poverty rates are measured as the percentage of respondents with income less than the poverty threshold. Welfare recipients who receive in-kind benefits, such as food stamps, enjoy greater purchasing power, but cannot report more income pre se. Moreover, minority legislators, in addition to the minority mass public, tend to believe that these policies are effective and regular sponsor legislation in this area (Bratton and Haynie, 1999; Haynie, 2001).

Recent studies have also tied education policies to racial/ethnic politics (Hero, 1998, 2007; Meier and Stewart, 1991; Owens, 2005; Wong, 1999). Wong (1999) argues that minority officials are advocates of public programs designed to alleviate the economic deprivation of their constituencies, including education. At the state level, there is evidence that minority representatives support greater expenditures are more likely sponsor legislation related to education (Haynie, 2001; Owens, 2005).

We measure state support for welfare and education programs as per capita spending

in the two domains.¹ We prefer expenditure based measures because they represent policy outputs rather than outcomes. Policy outcomes, such as the percentage of minorities who fail to graduate from high school, are undoubtedly of great substantive importance to minority communities and merit examination. However, outcomes are not directly manipulable by political institutions in the same way as outputs. The per capita expenditures on welfare and education are logged for estimation. Figures 2 and 3 present temporal dynamics in the per capita expenditures on education and welfare from 1980 to 2000 by state.²

[Figures 2 and 3 Here]

Our expectation is that state expenditures on welfare and education will be a function of the size of the Black and Latino population. We account for the percentage of Blacks and Latinos within a state with data obtained from the U.S. Population Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. We further argue that the relationship between minority group size and policy outputs is contingent upon the absence of restrictive voter registration laws, the income disparity between groups, and the percentage of Blacks and Latinos serving in the state legislature.

To control for general socioeconomic inequality, we rely on Black/Anglo and Latino/Anglo income ratios. The income ratios are based on the Black, Latino, and Anglo median family incomes reported in the 1980, 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses. The ratios are then computed by dividing Black (and Latino) family incomes by Anglo family incomes. Thus, a larger score denotes higher income equality. Non-census years are imputed using a weighted moving average. The average Black/Anglo ratio is 0.65 and the average Latino/Anglo ratio is 0.72.

We expect the presence of Black and Latino state legislators to have a direct, as well as indirect, effect on welfare and education expenditures. Our measures of descriptive representation for Blacks come from the Roster of Black Elected Officials published by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. For the Latinos, the measure is calculated using information from National Directory of Latino Elected Officials published by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials.

¹The per capita spending for welfare equals the total amount of expenditure on welfare divided by the total population, while the per capita spending for education equals the total amount of expenditure on education divided by the number of school-age population between 5 and 17 years old.

²The variables are not logged. Nebraska is excluded because it is not included in our regression analysis presented below.

We use voter registration data in *the Book of the States* and create an indicator variable that equals 0 when states require voters to be registered before election day and equals 1 when states have no such requirement and voters can register on election day.³ North Dakota has no registration requirement and is included in the states with voter registration on election day.

We include several control variables that account for political, economic, and demographic differences across states. While race may play an important role in the allocation of resources to welfare and education programs, partisanship is likely to be a significant determinant of state expenditures as well. Although Lublin (1997) points out instances where the voting patterns of Black representatives are clearly distinguishable from Anglo Democrats, we expect Democratic control of the state legislature and the presence of a Democratic governor to be associated with greater levels of spending on these two issues. Our data on the partisan makeup of state governments come from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Erikson, Wright and McIver (1993) and Berry et al. (1998) contend that public opinion has a significant effect on state politics and policy outcomes. Their empirical evidence demonstrates that liberal public opinion results in more liberal state public policies. Accordingly, we use Berry et al.'s (1998) citizen ideology measure as a control. The measures range from 0 to 100 where higher values indicate higher levels of liberalism.

In addition to these variables, our model also includes the total population size, the percentage of school-age children, the percentage of senior population over 65 years old, the percentage of the unemployed, the total amount of Federal aid to states, per capita Gross State Product (GSP), and per capita personal income. We take a log of the total population size, federal aid, GSP, and personal income. These data are from various years of *the Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1.

[Table 1 Here]

Our time-series cross-sectional data of states require special attention for estimation. In order to take account of potential unit heterogeneity and non-spherical error structures in our data, we use a fixed effect estimator with Arellano standard errors for model estimation.⁴ We include both state and year fixed effects in our models. An Arellano estimator (Arellano, 1987)

³The states with election day registration are Idaho (since 1994), Maine (since 1980), Minnesota (since 1980), New Hampshire (since 1994), Oregon (from 1980 to 1988), Wisconsin (since 1980), and Wyoming (since 1994).

⁴We avoid to use a fixed effect estimator with a lagged dependent variable because the small number of time points in our data set ($t=20$) can cause a bias in estimation. See Judson and Owen (1999); Kiviet (1995) for more details.

is an alternative version of White estimator and intended to compute heteroskedasticity and serial correlation consistent standard errors for fixed effects models. Note that Levin, Lin, and Chu’s unit root test for panel data (Levin, Lin and Chu, 2002) indicates that our dependent variables are stationary.⁵

Findings

We begin by testing the effects of Black and Latino population size on per capita welfare expenditures in the states. Table 2 reports the estimated effects of the racial environments when only the percentages of Black and Latino residents are included in the model (Column 1), when Black and Latino group size is interacted with our indicator of voter registration on election day (Column 2), when the interactions between Black and Latino group size and the income ratios are included (Column 3), and when Black and Latino group size is interacted with the share of Black and Latino representatives in the state legislature (Column 4). Table 3 presents estimates using the same specification for per capita education expenditures. The threat or backlash hypothesis suggests that the percentage of Blacks and Latinos with a state is negatively related to each spending measure. Our conditional hypotheses lead us to expect that the interactions between Black and Latino group size and the income ratios will be positive. Likewise, the interaction between Black and Latino group size and the level of descriptive representation is hypothesized to have a positive effect, while the the interaction of Black and Latino group size with voter registration may potentially be either positive or negative.

[Tables 2 and 3 Here]

As expected, Column 1 in Tables 2 and 3 reports that the percentage of Blacks and Latinos within a state has a negative impact on welfare and education expenditures. Except for the effect of Black population size on education expenditures, the estimates are statistically discernible from zero. As minority group size increases, state governments allocate less money to welfare and education programs.

Is the relationship between the racial/ethnic context and policy outputs conditional on the degree of minority electoral influence? Tables 2 and 3 also present evidence to address this question. After the interaction terms are included in the models, most of the coefficients

⁵We included a trend variable in the test.

associated with the Black and Latino group size remain negative and statistically significant. The interaction terms exhibit consistent patterns. The negative coefficients associated with the interaction terms in Column 2 of both tables indicate that states with voter registration on election day or no voter registration strengthen the negative impact of Black and Latino population size on welfare and education expenditures. On the other hand, the positive coefficients associated with the interaction terms in Column 3 suggest that higher levels of income equality between Blacks and Anglos and between Latinos and Anglos mediate the negative impacts of minority group size. The negative coefficients associated with the interactions in Column 4 seem to be inconsistent with our expectations regarding the impact of descriptive representation.

The results for the control variables are mixed. Most of the variables are estimated to have an insignificant impact on the expenditure variables. Table 2 demonstrates that Democratic Governors, more federal aids, liberal citizen ideology, greater population size, and smaller school-age population are associated with greater per capita expenditures on welfare programs. Table 2 finds that state gross product, the size of the school-age population, and the size of senior population over 65 years old have a statistically significant impact on the education expenditures; greater economic capacity and the smaller proportion of children and senior citizens in the total population are associated with more expenditures for education.

In order to evaluate the interactive relationships more carefully, we calculate the substantive effects of the Black and Latino population size on our measures of state welfare and education expenditures when the conditioning variables are set at zero and one for the indicator variable of voter registration on election day or at the minimum and the maximum values for the income ratio and the share of Black and Latino representatives in the legislatures. The results for welfare expenditures are presented in Figure 4 where the solid lines denote the effects of Black and Latino population size when the conditioning variable is set at zero or the minimum and the dotted lines represent its effect when the conditioning variable is set at one or the maximum. Since the standard errors as well as the marginal effects of Black and Latino population size depend on the values of the conditioning variables, we compute t statistics for each value of the conditioning variables and add them to the figure. Figure 5 presents the conditional substantive effects for the education expenditures. Note that all expenditure variables are logged.

[Figures 4 and 5 Here]

The top-left panel in Figure 4 shows that the negative effect of the Black population size on the welfare expenditures is stronger in states with voter registration on election day or no voter registration. A similar result is found for the education spending in the top-left panel of Figure 5. These findings suggest that less restrictive registration systems produce a more conservative median voter, which results in adverse policy results for Blacks. We also observe a similar conditional linkage between the percentage of Latinos in a state and both welfare and education expenditures, though the conditioning effects of voter registration laws are less substantial.

Further, Figures 4 and 5 offer supportive evidence for our expectation regarding the conditional linkage between minority population size and the income ratio. The middle-left panel in Figure 4 and the middle-right panel in Figure 5 show that higher income equality between Blacks and Whites and between Latinos and Whites weakens the negative effect of their population sizes on welfare and education expenditures. Importantly, in the states with the highest income equality, Black and Latino population size does not have a negative effect on our expenditure variables. Similar income levels between the Anglos and minorities seem to give minority groups a greater degree of electoral influence in the states.

The bottom panels of Figures 4 and 5 reports how the degree of descriptive representation mitigates the negative effect of Black and Latino population size on welfare and education expenditures. Despite our theoretical expectations, we find no difference that the effect of minority population size differs for states with or without high levels descriptive representation.

Conclusion

In their seminal work, Erickson, Wright, and McIver (1993) show that public policies within the states are remarkably responsive to public opinion. Working from the assumption that political actors react to changes in the policy preferences of citizens, some scholars argue that states with large minority populations are more likely to produce racially liberal public policies. Others, as we have noted, suggest the opposite. According to this view, large minority populations produce a sense of racial threat among Anglos. The net result is an electorate which is more supportive of racially conservative public policies.

The literature offers empirical evidence for each perspective; however, both tend to oversimplify the literature on how racial/ethnic context influences racial attitudes and policy pref-

erences. Early scholars (Allport, 1979 [1954]) and recent empirical work (Branton and Jones, 2005) argue that the relationship between minority group size and racial attitudes is contingent upon socioeconomic context. This study offers the first attempt to apply this argument to the literature on minority representation at the state level. Our findings confirm the presence of an interactive relationship between minority group size and socioeconomic context. While the presence of a large minority population does appear to be associated with conservative policies in line with the threat hypothesis, the presence of relative socioeconomic equality between minorities and Anglos dampens this relationship.

In a departure from previous literature, we maintain that the presence of lax voter registration laws does not only minorities to more easily translate their group size into favorable political outcomes. States with large minority populations enacted racially conservative policies before the passage of the Voting Rights Act as minorities had little means to hold elected officials accountable. Since the mid-1960s, the increased accessibility of the ballot was thought to reverse the effect of racial/ethnic context on politics at the state level (see Fording, 1997). Recent studies, however, show that less restrictive voter registration laws benefit economically advantaged groups. Applying this finding to the study of state racial policy outputs, our empirical results show that the effect of racial threat is exacerbated in states with no or same day voter registration requirements.

The dynamics of racial/ethnic politics in the US are seldom easy to decipher. Relationships tend to be complicated and are often conditional. The result is often a series of mixed findings within the literature. In this paper, we have point to the relationship between racial/ethnic group size and public policy outputs in the states as one example. It is essential that future research consider the role of socioeconomic conditions and electoral institutions in shaping the effects of racial/ethnic context. Scholars should also be mindful to incorporate developments within the field of political behavior into studies of public policy, especially at the sub-national level.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Log Per Capita Welfare Expenditure	5.695	0.461	4.157	6.911
Log Per Capita Education Expenditure	8.015	0.288	6.925	9.173
Percent Black	9.720	9.282	0.222	36.488
Percent Latino	5.608	7.684	0.465	42.749
Voter Registration on Election Day	0.110	0.313	0.000	1.000
Black-White Income Ratio	0.653	0.103	0.445	1.122
Latino-White Income Ratio	0.721	0.135	0.088	1.222
Percent Black Legislator	5.959	5.762	0.000	26.471
Percent Latino Legislator	1.840	5.304	0.000	40.179
Percent Democratic Representatives	56.958	17.456	12.857	95.238
Percent Democratic Senators	57.547	18.075	8.571	100.000
Democratic Governor	0.541	0.499	0.000	1.000
Percent Unemployed	6.203	2.189	2.000	18.000
Log Gross State Product Per Capita	2.788	0.216	2.305	4.042
Log Total Federal Aid Per Capita	6.169	0.314	4.601	7.836
Citizen Ideology	47.984	14.972	9.251	93.912
Log Income Per Capita	9.532	0.177	9.055	10.072
Log Total Population Size	14.960	1.013	12.904	17.387
Percent School-Age Population	19.198	1.751	15.362	26.761
Percent 65 Years Old and Over	12.089	2.161	2.869	18.197
N of Observations			1029	

Table 2: The Impact of Minority Population on Welfare Spending

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Percent Black	-0.056 (0.020)	-0.050 (0.020)	-0.119 (0.041)	-0.056 (0.020)
Percent Latino	-0.030 (0.014)	-0.031 (0.014)	-0.009 (0.036)	-0.032 (0.014)
Percent Black \times Voter Registration on Election Day		-0.074 (0.056)		
Percent Latino \times Voter Registration on Election Day		-0.017 (0.022)		
Percent Black \times Black-White Income Ratio			0.096 (0.046)	
Percent Latino \times Latino-White Income Ratio			-0.033 (0.063)	
Percent Black \times Percent Black Legislator				-0.000 (0.000)
Percent Latino \times Percent Latino Legislator				-0.000 (0.000)
Voter Registration on Election day	0.047 (0.057)	0.202 (0.158)	0.062 (0.060)	0.046 (0.059)
Black-White Income Ratio	0.610 (0.244)	0.531 (0.237)	0.376 (0.224)	0.601 (0.237)
Latino-White Income Ratio	-0.286 (0.137)	-0.273 (0.136)	-0.190 (0.173)	-0.280 (0.136)
Percent Black Legislator	0.005 (0.005)	0.005 (0.005)	0.006 (0.004)	0.009 (0.012)
Percent Latino Legislator	0.005 (0.004)	0.005 (0.004)	0.002 (0.006)	0.017 (0.013)
Percent Democratic Representatives	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.001)
Percent Democratic Senators	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)	-0.001 (0.001)
Democratic Governor	0.031 (0.016)	0.029 (0.017)	0.033 (0.016)	0.030 (0.016)
Percent Unemployed	0.008 (0.009)	0.007 (0.009)	0.007 (0.009)	0.007 (0.009)
Log Gross State Product Per Capita	-0.144 (0.190)	-0.157 (0.185)	-0.149 (0.191)	-0.163 (0.196)
Log Total Federal Aid Per Capita	0.470 (0.150)	0.449 (0.145)	0.468 (0.149)	0.472 (0.149)
Citizen Ideology	0.002 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.003 (0.001)	0.003 (0.001)
Log Income Per Capita	0.312 (0.450)	0.311 (0.440)	0.321 (0.442)	0.338 (0.450)
Log Total Population Size	0.775 (0.265)	0.755 (0.271)	0.679 (0.279)	0.779 (0.259)
Percent School-Age Population	-0.051 (0.018)	-0.050 (0.018)	-0.044 (0.016)	-0.051 (0.018)
Percent 65 and over Population	0.001 (0.030)	-0.003 (0.030)	0.004 (0.030)	0.002 (0.030)
Constant	-10.026 (5.768)	-9.603 (5.774)	-8.451 (5.956)	-10.272 (5.652)
Adjusted R^2	0.929	0.930	0.930	0.930
N of Observations			1029	

Notes: Table entries are regression estimates with Arellano standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is logged per capita expenditures on welfare. Data included 49 states from 1980 to 2000. Nebraska was excluded for its nonpartisan legislature. Fixed effects (not reported here) are included for states and years.

Table 3: The Impact of Minority Population on Education Spending

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Percent Black	-0.011 (0.010)	-0.009 (0.010)	-0.016 (0.020)	-0.009 (0.010)
Percent Latino	-0.014 (0.007)	-0.014 (0.007)	-0.033 (0.014)	-0.015 (0.007)
Percent Black \times Voter Registration on Election Day		-0.017 (0.017)		
Percent Latino \times Voter Registration on Election Day		-0.011 (0.008)		
Percent Black \times Black-White Income Ratio			0.007 (0.029)	
Percent Latino \times Latino-White Income Ratio			0.040 (0.029)	
Percent Black \times Percent Black Legislator				-0.000 (0.000)
Percent Latino \times Percent Latino Legislator				-0.000 (0.000)
Voter Registration	0.016 (0.029)	0.082 (0.039)	0.012 (0.030)	0.018 (0.029)
Black-White Income Ratio	0.254 (0.218)	0.241 (0.223)	0.232 (0.250)	0.253 (0.217)
Latino-White Income Ratio	-0.012 (0.062)	-0.007 (0.063)	-0.075 (0.076)	-0.014 (0.063)
Percent Black Legislator	-0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.000 (0.002)	0.005 (0.006)
Percent Latino Legislator	-0.000 (0.001)	-0.000 (0.001)	0.003 (0.002)	0.000 (0.005)
Percent Democratic Representatives	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Percent Democratic Senators	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)
Democratic Governor	0.002 (0.012)	0.001 (0.012)	-0.001 (0.012)	0.001 (0.012)
Percent Unemployed	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)	0.003 (0.006)
Log Gross State Product Per Capita	0.458 (0.118)	0.447 (0.121)	0.460 (0.118)	0.441 (0.122)
Log Total Federal Aid Per Capita	-0.018 (0.035)	-0.026 (0.036)	-0.012 (0.034)	-0.016 (0.036)
Citizen Ideology	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Log Income Per Capita	0.133 (0.244)	0.143 (0.238)	0.121 (0.234)	0.157 (0.242)
Log Total Population Size	-0.306 (0.137)	-0.314 (0.138)	-0.325 (0.133)	-0.305 (0.137)
Percent School-Age Population	-0.039 (0.008)	-0.040 (0.007)	-0.039 (0.007)	-0.039 (0.008)
Percent 65 and over Population	-0.022 (0.012)	-0.023 (0.012)	-0.020 (0.012)	-0.022 (0.012)
Constant	11.349 (2.970)	11.453 (3.002)	11.775 (3.038)	11.102 (2.896)
Adjusted R^2	0.932	0.932	0.932	0.932
N of Observations			1029	

Notes: Table entries are regression estimates with Arellano standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is logged per capita expenditures on education. Data included 49 states from 1980 to 2000. Nebraska was excluded for its nonpartisan legislature. Fixed effects (not reported here) are included for states and years.

Figure 1: White Backlash and Minority Electoral Constraint

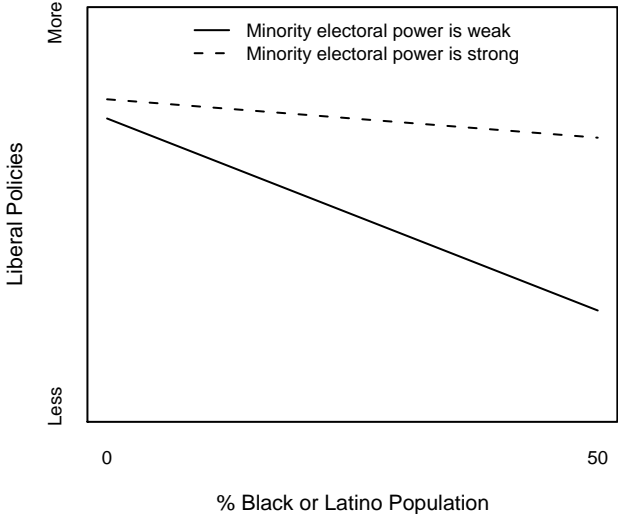


Figure 2: Per Capita Expenditures for Welfare by State and Year

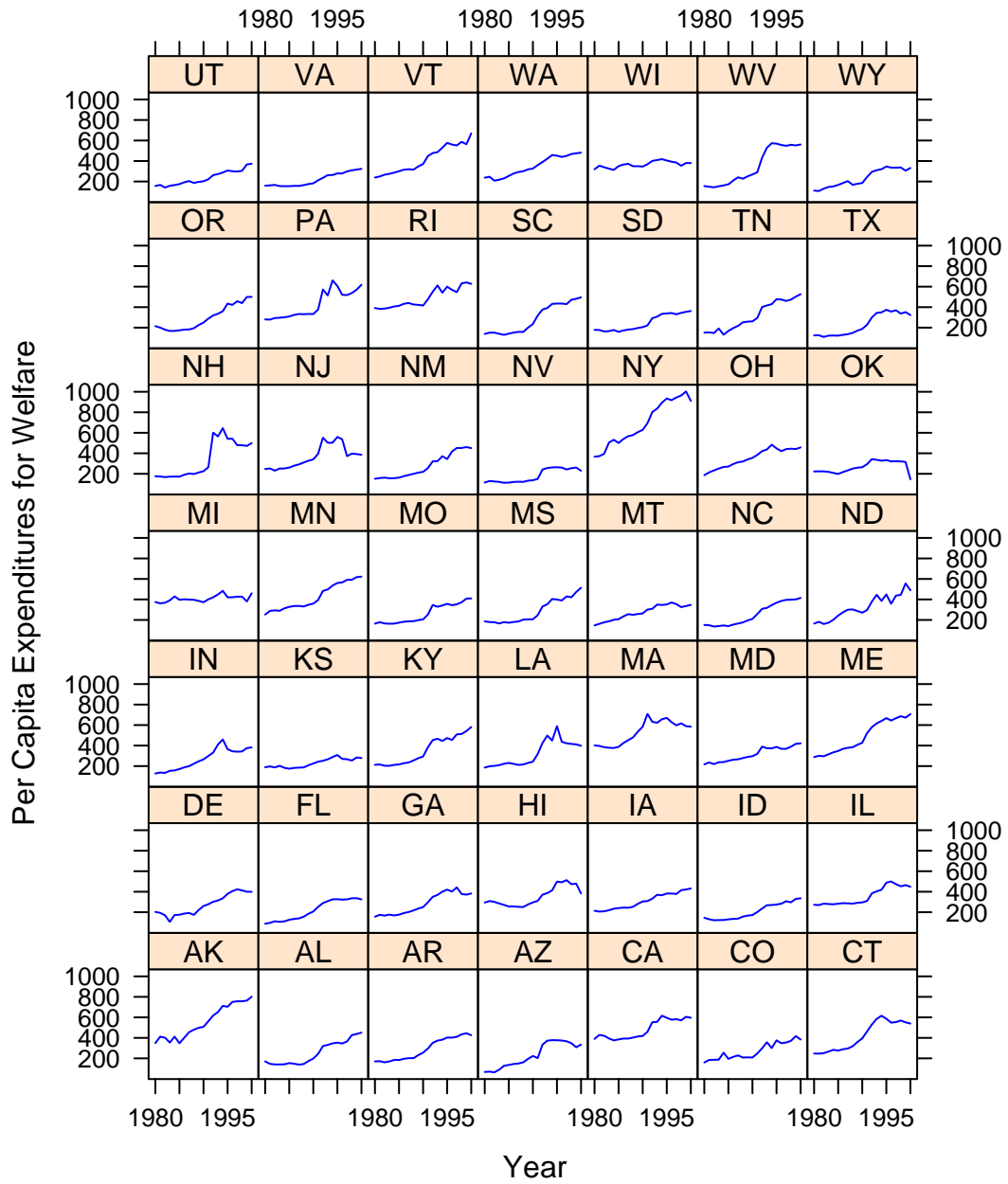


Figure 3: Per Capita Expenditures for Education by State and Year

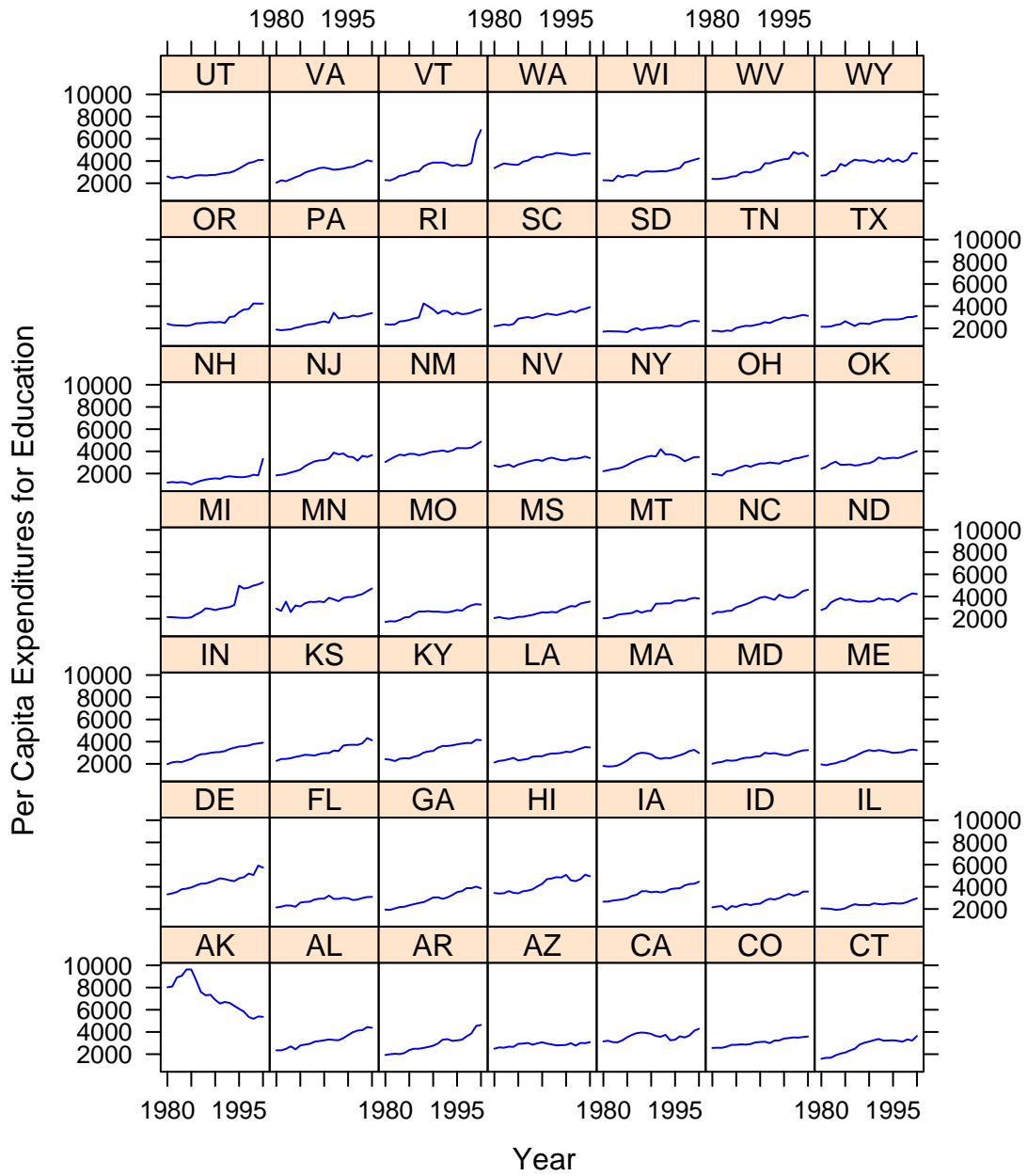


Figure 4: The Conditional Impact of Minority Population Size on Welfare Expenditures

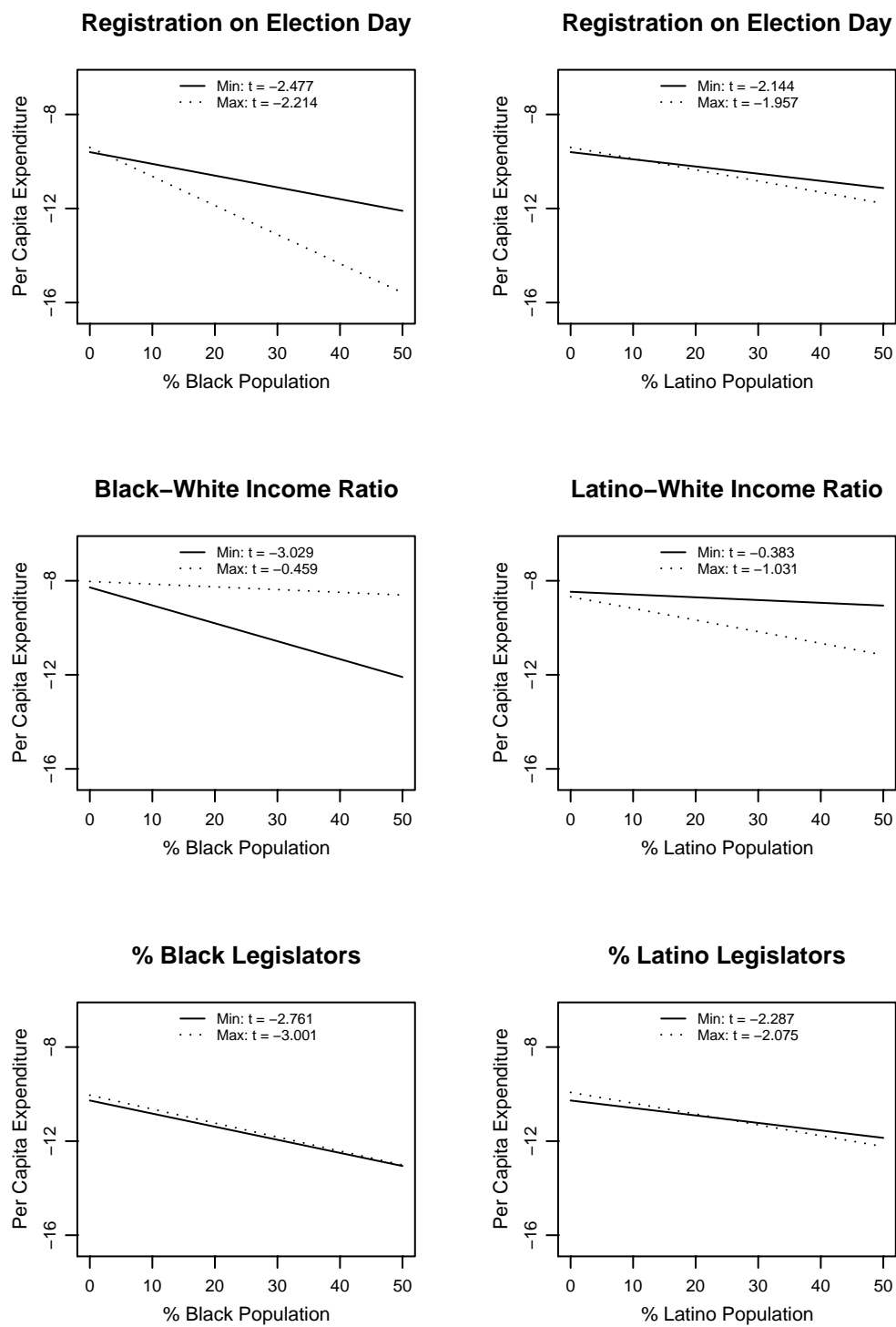


Figure 5: The Conditional Impact of Minority Population Size on Education Expenditures

