The Initiative Process and the Dynamics of State Interest Group Populations

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Abstract

What effect does the initiative process have on the volatility of interest group populations? Theoretical results suggest that interest group communities in initiative states should be characterized by greater rates of entry and exit since the presence of the initiative process increases mobilizations by potentially less stable groups, particularly broad-based citizen groups. I test this prediction using data on state interest group lobby registrations in 1990 and 1997. Tabular and regression analysis of exit and entry rates for all groups as well as separate analyses for different kinds of groups, including citizen, economic, membership, institutions, and associations are consistent with the prediction, with the effect strongest and most consistent for citizen and membership groups.

1 The Initiative Process and Interest Groups

Institutions for direct legislation influence representation and behavior by organized interests. By allowing citizens and organized interests to change policy without direct involvement by the legislature, institutions like the initiative process alter groups' decisions about whether to mobilize and how to lobby. In particular, the direct initiative process, as opposed to the referendum process has important consequences since it offers citizens and organized interests broad flexibility in designing policy proposals without legislative interference.

One important consequence is that the twenty-four U.S. states that permit direct initiatives have more interest groups (Boehmke 2002, 2005*a*; Smith and Tolbert 2004). Further, the magnitude of this effect is sizable — initiative states have almost thirty percent more groups — and it is particularly large for broad-based citizen groups rather than narrow economic interests. Since citizen groups are those with open memberships that represent the interest of the general public rather than representing a narrow economic interest, this finding is important since it demonstrates that institutions like direct legislation increase representation and representativeness among interest group communities.

Yet knowing that the initiative process increases the size of interest group populations does not tell us the whole story. Theories of the initiative process suggest that it should influence not just the size of interest group populations, but also their dynamics. To this point, however, no empirical tests have been brought to bear on the question of how the initiative process alters the dynamics underlying interest group populations. Here, I study this issue by analyzing interest group entry and exit rates across states. Tabular and regression analysis indicates significant increases in both in initiative states, particularly for citizen and membership groups. Further, I demonstrate that

one consequence of these different dynamics is that initiative states have a greater proportion of local interest groups — groups that are not registered to lobby in any other state. These findings suggest that one of the mechanisms through which the initiative process enhances representation is through the greater fluidity of organized interest communities.

2 Initiative Mobilizations and Population Dynamics

The initiative process influences interest group behavior in a variety of ways.[1] Most immediately, groups can use the initiative process to propose new legislation and to otherwise shape the debate across different policies. Less directly, groups can also use the threat of proposing an initiative to influence policy decisions made in the legislature. The legislature's knowledge that policies that it enacts may subsequently be challenged by a ballot initiative lead it to choose policies that are close enough to the median voter to preempt or discourage a group's proposal (Boehmke 2005*a*; Gerber 1996; Matsusaka and McCarty 2001).[2]

These two forms of influence combine to alter interest groups decisions. Given an additional outlet of policy influence if their efforts in the legislature fail or are blocked by entrenched interests, groups perceive greater benefits from mobilization. This leads initiative states to have more interest groups, particularly citizen groups since they are best situated to use the initiative process (Gerber 1999). Conseqeuently, initiative states have larger interest group communities, with the effect particularly large for citizen or membership groups (Boehmke 2002, 2005*a*; Smith and Tolbert 2004).[3] Further, evidence based on survey data shows that groups in initiative states have, on average, different resources and employ a different mix of lobbying tactics and strategies (Boehmke 2005*a*). The cross-sectional nature of these studies, however, limits their ability to test

the dynamics of initiative mobilizations.

To see why these possibly different dynamics are important, consider two different ways that interest communities in initiative states could be larger than those in noninitiative states. The first community is just as stable as those in noninitiative states — the only difference is that it has greater carrying capacity due to the presence of the initiative process. The second community, on the other hand, is more volatile — it has more groups, but the identities of these additional groups change from year to year as a greater proportion of groups exit and enter the lobbying sphere. If initiative politics is just an extension of legislative politics, then an initiative state's expanded interest community would merely reflect the same interests that would exist without the initiative process, consistent with the first scenario. If, on the other hand, ballot measure politics are substantially different from legislative politics then the additional groups are likely to represent traditionally underrepresented interests.

Given our understanding of the consequences of the initiative process for interest groups, the second scenario is the more likely. First, groups mobilized by the initiative process are marginal, in the sense that the benefits to mobilization were small enough that they would not have mobilized without it. Given their initial proximity to the threshold for mobilization, these groups likely suffer a more tenuous existence. Early lack of success may be more likely to push them back over the edge towards failure, and therefore exit. Potentially exacerbating this greater tendency towards increased exit rates is the fact that the groups that are most likely to benefit from the initiative process are broad-based citizen groups rather than economic groups (Gerber 1999); the latter are potentially more difficult to mobilize and maintain due to the collective action problem and the lack of an associated organizational base.[4] Institutions, on the other hand, are able to enter and exit the lobbying sphere as needed since they have an additional reason for existing.

That the increased mobilizations are disproportionately composed of membership groups rather than institutions may further increase volatility.

The second cause of greater volatility revolves around the appearance of specific ballot measures. Groups form to pursue and advocate for these measures and many of them may register to lobby in order to try to reach a compromise or influence related legislation in the legislature. Thus the presence of specific measures on upcoming ballots or the circulation of potential measures for future ballots encourages groups to mobilize or lobby regarding those measures.[5] If the ballot measure fails to reach the ballot, as most do, then the supporters will have to confront their failure to raise enough money or recruit enough volunteers and may realize that their issue does not have enough support to warrant continued mobilization and lobbying. If the measure reaches the ballot and fails to secure sufficient votes, as most do, supporters again will be faced with the reality that there is not majority support for their issue. Further, if the measure does reach the ballot and does pass, the issue may be settled and the temporarily formed group will disband. Again, I expect this process to disproportionately affect citizen interest groups, since they are more likely to use the initiative process to change the status quo (Boehmke 2003, 2005*b*; Donovan et al. 1998; Ernst 2001).

Relatedly, groups that oppose these measures will also come forth to campaign once proponents demonstrate sufficient strength or qualify their measure for the ballot. These groups are also likely to be temporary in nature as they have formed in direct response to the threat posed by a potential or specific ballot measure. Once that threat fails to materialize or fails on election day, the opposition group will often dissolve. In many cases these opposition groups may be rather ad hoc and may not mobilize to the extent of lobbying the legislature. In other cases opposition groups may mobilize to counter the indirect threat of a potential initiative and would be more likely to attempt to protect the status quo in the legislature. In either case, there would again be

greater exit and entry rates in initiative states.

Because groups sponsoring initiatives are more likely to be citizen groups unable to accomplish their goals in the legislature, I expect that opposition groups will tend to be largely economic interests. Yet because opposition groups form only in response to potential measures and may not do so in all cases, I still expect the the initiative process to have a greater numerical effect on citizen groups. Further, because there are fewer of them than economic groups, the relative effect will even greater for citizen groups.

This is not to suggest that all groups throw in the towel after one round, but rather that some groups in initiative states mobilize to pursue ballot measures, increasing entry rates, and that when many of those proposals fail, those groups will cease to exist, increasing exit rates. Alternatively, groups that are succesful at the ballot may see their purpose accomplished and move on, though certainly some will attempt to continue their success either by pursuing other issues or working with government officials to implement their successful proposal. Again, the hurdle is likely greatest for membership groups: though they may be able to increase the salience of the issue enough to overcome the collective action problem in the short term during a heated campaign, the group may find it more difficult once election day has passed. That most initiatives are supported by traditionally under-represented citizen groups increases the share of initiative mobilizations that may be more temporary than more typical mobilizations. Empirical evidence is broadly consistent with this argument, as interest groups in initiative states are not only more likely to have greater memberships and fewer financial resources, they also tend to be significantly younger (Boehmke 2005*a*, Ch. 5).

These greater exit and entry rates only serve to reinforce each other. With additional groups

entering at greater rates, interest group communities in initiative states will experience greater pressure for exits in order to stabilize at their carrying capacity (Gray and Lowery 1996). Greater entry creates pressure leading to greater exit rates, which in turn can create space for additional entries. Because groups mobilized by the initiative process — either directly or indirectly — are likely less stable or focused on more short-term goals, they are also more likely to exit.

In order to demonstrate that these different dynamics have implications for representation, I also study the effect of the initiative process on the localism of state interest communities. I expect that initiative states have more localized interest group populations for two reasons, which I expand upon later: first, increased exits should open the door for newer interests to enter; second, different types of policies are raised in initiative states, creating incentives for groups with a stake in those policies to mobilize and lobby.

3 Comparison of Population Characteristics and Dynamics

To test my hypotheses about how the initiative process influences rates of exit, entry, and localism among interest group populations, I use Gray and Lowery's data on 1990 and 1997 lobby registrations in the fifty states (Gray and Lowery 2001*a*,*b*; Wolak et al. 2002).[6] These data allow me to test the influence of the initiative process on the dynamics of interest group populations in ways that previous data do not. The 1997 data consist of a list of every lobby registration in the fifty states and indicate the name of the registered group, what type of group it is, and whether the group was registered in the same state in 1990. Combined with information about total registrations per state in 1990, this allows me determine the number and proportion of groups exiting between 1990 and 1997 and the number and proportion of new registrations in 1997, roughly corresponding to entry

rates. Because the 1997 data have information on the specific groups associated with each registration, I can also determine the number of groups registered in just one state to test my localism prediction.

In addition, the data partition groups into three primary categories — membership groups, associations and institutions — and twenty-six different sectors including Banking, Insurance, Religious, Tax and Welfare (Gray and Lowery 2001*b*). The first of the three broad categories corresponds to groups with autonomous members — exactly the type of groups that would benefit from the initiative process — while the second category includes peak associations and the final category corresponds to economic interests, such as health care providers, schools and universities, and casinos. These three categories have been the focus of many studies since they reflect the broad dimensions of interest group structure and conflict in the United States (Boehmke 2005*a*; Gray and Lowery 1996; Salisbury 1984; Walker 1991). While the three broad categories are useful for determining whether the effect of the initiative process is greater for broad-based membership groups, constructing measures specifically for economic and citizen groups requires additional work. Previous studies (i.e., Boehmke 2002, 2005*a*) generated the citizen group category by combining the social and government categories from Gray and Lowery's (1996) ten subpopulations; Gray and Lowery referred to these two categories as nonprofit groups. Unfortunately for comparability's sake, the social and government categories are not available in the 1997 data. And while Gray and Lowery (2001*b*) combine twelve of the twenty-six categories into a new version of the nonprofit category, visual inspection of the names of the groups so labeled suggests that there are many that one might not consider citizen groups. I therefore developed a finer coding of citizen and economic groups based on both the issue area of concern as well as whether the group was a membership group, an association or an institution.[7] Because the 1990 data do not have a full

census, I am unable to generate a measure of these groups in that year, making an analysis of exit rates for the economic and citizen group categories impossible.

Overall, there are 21,098 distinct groups registered to lobby in 1997; these groups generate a total of 34,490 registrations, for an average of 690 per state. These registrations are then partitioned into two categories: those that also existed in the same state in 1990 and those that did not. The 454 average registrations in the latter category represent entry into a state lobbying community, leaving 235 groups that registered in both 1990 and 1997. Entry rates for each state are constructed by calculating the percentage of groups registered in 1997 that were not registered in 1990.[8] Exit rates are determined using information on the average number of registrations in 1990. With 587 registrations on average in 1990 and 235 of those still maintained in 1997, there are 352 groups exiting per state over the seven-year period. The average exit rate across states calculated in this fashion is fifty-seven percent.

Localism, or uniqueness, is measured following Wolak et al. (2002) by calculating the proportion of groups registered in a state that do not register in any other state. Wolak et al. (2002) find a high degree of localism in their study of interest group registrations in the fifty states in 1997: fifty-three percent of registrations were unique and eighty-six percent of groups were registered in only one state. Localism is therefore a very common feature of interest group populations, though there is a great deal of variety in unique registrations across states, with an average value of 49.3%, a high of 66.2% in California, and a low of 35.8% in Kentucky.

Note that it is crucial to focus on the rates for these three measures rather than on the raw numbers. Because the initiative process affects the number of groups registered in a state, it changes the baseline from which exits and entries occur. Initiative states simply have more groups and

therefore more opportunities for groups to exit and enter; it is possible that initiative states could experience a greater number of registration deaths, but actually have a lower rate of exit since they start with more groups. Thus it is critical for testing my hypotheses to focus on exit and entry rates rather than on the number of exits and entries.

Table 1 contains information about the values of these measures for initiative and noninitiative states for all groups and for the three different categories. As expected and demonstrated in previous studies, initiative states have more groups in 1990 and 1997 than noninitiative states, particularly for membership groups and institutions, though the gap seems to have narrowed a bit. This narrowing is due to two factors: Florida's unusually large interest group population in 1990 (Brasher, Lowery and Gray 1999) and Mississippi's adoption of the initiative process in 1992. As the only state that added the initiative process in the recent past, the resulting change in Mississippi's interest population is instructive. From 1990 to 1997, the number of groups increased from 107 to 301, moving Mississippi from last to seventh last in terms of total groups and placing it at the top in terms of new groups in 1997.

[Table 1 Here.]

Turning to the measures of dynamics and localism, the table shows that the average number of groups exiting between 1990 to 1997 is much higher in initiative states at 418 compared to 290 in noninitiative states.[9] Of course, since the starting point in 1990 was greater it is not surprising that more total groups were lost. Comparing the percentages of groups exiting between 1990 and 1997 demonstrates that the rate is also higher in initiative states, 58.5% to 54.4%. Further, the difference is weakly significant at the .10 level using a one-tailed test. Assuming a constant exit rate, this means that 11.8% of the groups in initiative states and 10.6% of the groups in noninitiative states exit from one year to the next.[10] Among the three categories of groups, the effect is particularly

large for membership groups and institutions, with nine percent more groups exiting over the seven year period. Note that these data indicate that membership groups are, in fact, the least prone to exit in these data. At the same time, however, their exit rates increase the most in initiative states, suggesting that greater volatility in initiative states may be driven more by institutional incentives rather than changes in the distribution of groups.

Now consider rates of group formation, measured by the proportion of groups registered in a state in 1997 that were not also registered in 1990. As expected, more new groups registered in initiative states with 486 new registrations compared to 425 in noninitiative states. Thus 65.3% of registrations in initiative states and 63.7% in noninitiative states in 1997 were by groups not registered in the same state in 1990. This translates into an annual entry rate of 15.3% in initiative states and 14.1% in noninitiative states.[11] Again, the difference is larger for membership groups and institutions, though significant only for the former. The raw numbers indicate that initiative states have about one-third more new membership groups than noninitiative states. The citizen versus economic categorization, available in 1997 only, indicates that there are more new economic and citizen groups in initiative states, though only the latter is (weakly) significant. Further, while newness rates are greater for citizen groups, the increase due to the initiative process is smaller.

Finally, the data also show that initiative states have more localized interest group populations. On average, 402 of the 724 registrations in 1997 were unique, in the sense that those groups were only registered in one state, corresponding to a uniqueness rate of 51.8%. Noninitiative states have significantly fewer unique registrations at 47.1%. Membership groups and citizen groups also see a significant increase in localism, as do associations and economic groups.

4 Regression Analyses of Exit and Entry Rates

The primary independent variable for testing my hypotheses is an indicator for the twenty-four states that have the direct initiative process. This constitutes a simple measure of the role of the initiative process across states; there is a fair degree of variation in regulations governing access to the ballot, including signature requirements, distribution requirements, and circulation periods, all of which affect the benefit of the initiative process for interest groups.[12] Other scholars have proposed measures of the importance of the initiative process in a state based on the number of initiatives (e.g., Smith and Tolbert 2004) or by constructing a measure of difficulty of use (Bowler and Donovan 2004). I do not employ these measures for a variety of reasons. First, theories of the initiative process predict both direct and indirect effects —- including the number of initiatives would only capture direct effects. Second, use and presence have a correlation of 0.61 in 1997, which makes it difficult to include both, especially given the number of observations[13] Third, including use alone would likely result in biased coefficients since it assumes that the effect of having the initiative process is zero. Including just the initiative indicator, however, provides an unbiased estimate of the average effect of the initiative process. Additional data may, in the future, help sort out these different effects.

The other variables I control for are generally dictated by the theoretical implications of Gray and Lowery's (1996) population ecology approach to studying interest group communities, referred to as the Energy-Stability-Area (ESA) model. The ESA model's three components help determine how many interest groups can exist in a state overall and within specific categories or issue areas; they have proven to be a robust and effective framework for studying state interest group populations.[14]

The first component, energy, is usually measured by government activity in the relevant area. Since I am interested in characteristics of interest group populations across broad categories and not in specific issue areas, I follow previous studies by using government expenditures as a share of a state's total economic activity to measure energy.[15] Additional measures employed include party competition (Gray and Lowery 1996, 2001*a*) and divided government (Boehmke 2002; Smith and Tolbert 2004). The second component, stability, captures sudden changes in and uncertainty about interest groups' environment; in the U.S. context this measure has been difficult to isolate given the high degree of stability in recent decades. Past measures of this include time since statehood or the end of the civil war (Gray and Lowery 1996). Finally, the third component, area, is a measure of a state's carrying capacity — how many groups it can support. This is usually measured at the aggregate level with a state's gross state product (GSP).[16] Because interest group systems are characterized by density dependence — adding new groups becomes harder as the number of groups increases — scholars also include the square of GSP.

In addition to the initiative indicator and the ESA variables, I add measures of state ideology (Erikson, Wright and McIver 1993) and legislative professionalism (King 2000). Previous studies have shown that more liberal states have more citizen groups (Boehmke 2002). Legislative professionalism could affect turnover rates in two ways: first, more professional legislatures are more stable and offer the opportunity to establish valuable long-term ties with elected officials (Hansen 1991); second, more professional legislatures have greater staff resources and may therefore be less reliant on information from interest groups. Berkman (2001) analyzes the size of state interest group populations in 1990 and finds that states with more professional legislatures have fewer interest groups, especially in large states, but does not study their effect on group turnover rates. Summaries of independent variables are given in Table 2.

The ESA model and its associated variables are designed to explain the size of state interest group populations, but two of my dependent variables — entry and exit rates — are based on changes in their size over time rather than their size in a given year. Following (Gray and Lowery 2001*a*), therefore, I modify the ESA model's independent variables to capture forces driving entry and exit rather than total registrations. First, I expect that more groups exit when government expenditures as a share of a state's total economic activity decrease and that more groups enter when they increase. Therefore, I construct a variable that is the difference between the 1997 and 1990 shares of government expenditures. Second, I construct a similar measure using the difference in GSP: states with an increase in economic activity between 1990 and 1997 should add more groups.[17] Third, I expect that states with high density relative to their carrying capacity lose groups at a greater rate. To measure excess density I follow Gray and Lowery (2001*a*) by using the residual from a model of total groups in 1990, though I normalize this variable by dividing by the predicted number of groups in 1990 in order to make it comparable across states.[18] States with more groups than expected in 1990 will witness more competitive pressure on existing groups to exit, resulting in greater exit rates from 1990 to 1997. In addition, I measure density relative to area by including the number of groups in 1990 divided by state GSP in 1990; greater values should increase the state's exit rate. When studying economic groups, citizen groups, membership groups, associations and institutions separately, I construct these variables using only the number of groups in that category.[19] Finally, due to the unique status of Florida's 1990 interest group population, I also include an indicator variable for Florida since the massive drop off in its population between 1990 and 1997 could artificially inflate the effect of the initiative process.[20]

4.1 Interest Group Exit Rates

I first test the effect of the initiative process on group exit rates. As described previously, I measure exit rates by comparing the number of groups registered in both 1990 and 1997 to the total number of groups registered in 1990. Since I am interested in the probability that a group registered in 1990 fails to register in 1997, I use the proportion of groups exiting in each state as the dependent variable. Because the dependent variable is a proportion, I estimate a grouped logit model rather than an ordinary least squares model, though all of the results regarding the initiative continue to hold when estimated with ordinary least squares regression.[21]

The results for my model of interest group exit rates are presented in Table 3. Overall, the results offer mixed support for my first hypothesis. While the coefficient for initiative states is positive in three of the models, it is only significant for membership groups (though it is close for total groups, with $p = .18$). In terms of substantive changes, first difference calculations indicate that the initiative process increases the seven-year exit rates by three percent overall and by nine percent for membership groups. Note that this is generally one of the largest substantive effects in the models.[22] Further, two methodological choices are critical: if the indicator variable for Florida is omitted, the coefficients for total groups, membership groups and institutions are each significant at the .05 level or better; in addition, the coefficients for all groups and institutions become significant when estimated by a linear regression model.

[Table 3 Here.]

The findings for my other variables are generally mixed as well. There is no evidence that changes in GSP or the share of government expenditures affects interest group exit rates. The excess 1990 density variable performs as expected, with states that have more groups than expected

in 1990 experiencing greater exit rates in 1997, though the effect is significant only for membership groups. Groups per GSP often does not have the expected sign, but the coefficients never approach significance. Considering the other variables indicates that more conservative states have lower exit rates, with the coefficient significant overall and for associations and institutions and narrowly missing significance for membership groups ($p = .11$). First difference calculations put the magnitude of the effect around six percent. Finally, states with more professional legislatures have lower exit rates in every case and the coefficients are all significant at the .10 level or better, with the exception of associations ($p = 15$). This is consistent with the argument that groups in more professionalized states are able to maintain stronger long-term relationships and therefore are less likely to exit from year to year. The first difference is greatest for membership groups at eight percent compared to five percent overall and for institutions. Further, note that these magnitudes are relative to a baseline in which sixty percent of groups would exit anyway.

4.2 Recent Mobilizations

I now turn my second hypothesis, which is that initiative states have greater rates of entry. To test this I estimate a grouped logit model for which the dependent variable is the proportion of groups registered in 1997 that were not registered in 1990. While this quantity does not precisely correspond to entry rates, it is highly related; groups in this category formed or began to lobby between 1990 and 1997 and can be thought of as groups new to the set of lobbying organizations. States with greater entry rates will clearly exhibit more new groups in 1997 than states with lower entry rates. In addition, this variable provides a measure of volatility since it indicates the proportion of groups that have not been around for a long time and how much an interest group system has changed over time.[23]

[Table 4 Here.]

The results for the proportion of new registrations are presented in Table 4 and include analyses of economic and citizen groups using the updated coding for the 1997 data. The initiative process is found to increase the proportion of new registrations in all six models. Further, the coefficient is significant for total groups, membership groups, associations, and citizen groups at the .05 level; for economic groups at the .10 level; and it is not too far off for institutions ($p = .18$). The substantive effect of the initiative process is between four and a half percent overall, with the effect closer to seven percent for membership and citizen groups. Thus the results again indicate that membership groups are affected the most, both statistically and substantively, by the presence of the initiative process.

Among the other variables, a consistent finding is that states with increases in GSP tend to have more new groups, with the coefficient significant or nearly so for all types of groups except membership groups. The coefficients for changes in government spending are all negative, which is contrary to expectation, though only one is significant. Lagged density exerts its influence mostly through 1990 groups per GSP, though excess groups is significant for associations. Dense states had more groups exiting, but these exits still offered limited space for new groups to enter. Finally, there is no evidence that ideology or legislative professionalism influence entry.

5 Implications of Dynamics: Localism of State Populations

In this section I demonstrate that these differences in exit and entry rates have consequences for the composition of interest group communities. Specifically, I study the effect of the initiative process on the localism of interest group populations, where localism is measured by the proportion of

groups in a state that are not registered in any other state. There are four reasons to expect that the effect of the initiative process on the underlying dynamics of group formation and death should produce important differences in the composition of interest group communities. First, the ESA model suggests and empirical evidence demonstrates that larger interest communities can support more niche groups, which translates into a greater proportion of unique groups (Wolak et al. 2002). Since the initiative process increases the number of groups, it should also increase the proportion of unique groups. Second, if groups exit the population at greater rates, new interests should find it easier to fill these more numerous openings. This process would lead initiative states to have more rapidly evolving interest communities that may be more reflective of contemporary interests than those in noninitiative states. Because the initiative process has its greatest effect among citizen and membership groups, groups mobilized by the initiative process do not merely reinforce the existing group population — they are drawn from a traditionally underrepresented part of the interest group world and their issue concerns should reflect this. Thus interest group populations in initiative states may be constituted by more localized, unique interests.

Third, the initiative process may also produce more localized groups because it opens the door to different issues — issues that the legislature may be able to suppress in its absence. The rise in initiative states of new issues such as anti-affirmative action policies, term limits, etc. are all consistent with this potential. Fourth, the presence of initiatives dealing with such topics on the ballot may spur more groups to mobilize around that issue. Empirical evidence about issue concerns is consistent with these arguments: Boehmke's (2005*a*) survey of the importance of various issues to interest groups indicates that groups in initiative states rated health, transportation and government policy as more important than groups in noninitiative states.

To study the effect of the initiative process on localism while controlling for other factors, I

again employ a grouped logit analysis, with the 1997 proportion of unique interest groups as the dependent variable. Since localism is not expected to be a product of changes over time in the variables associated with the ESA model, I employ the standard measures of GSP and the share of government expenditures rather than their changes. And since Florida's 1997 interest group population is not an outlier, I omit the indicator variable for Florida.

The findings for interest community localism are presented in Table 5. As predicted, the coefficient for the initiative process is positive for all four models. Further, the effect is significant for total groups, institutions, economic and citizen groups and nearly significant for membership groups ($p = .107$).[24] The marginal effects indicate a five percent increase in uniqueness overall and for economic groups in initiative states, a six percent increase for institutions, a three percent increase for membership group and a four percent increase for citizen groups. Note that the relative magnitude of these effects is backwards, a finding that I explore in the discussion section.

[Table 5 Here.]

The findings for the other independent variables show that states with larger GSP have more unique registrations, consistent with Wolak et al. (2002), though the squared term is not quite significant for total groups. Government expenditures do not have a consistent effect, but they are found to significantly increase the proportion of membership groups that are unique. The coefficients for ideology indicate that more conservative states tend to have fewer unique registrations; they are significant for both membership groups and associations. Finally, legislative professionalism is found to decrease uniqueness, but the effect is only significant for membership groups.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The findings in this paper add to our understanding of how the initiative process alters interest group populations. Not only does it result in larger populations, as previous studies have shown, but those populations exhibit greater volatility as measured by exit and entry rates. In particular, volatility added by the initiative process is greatest and matters most consistently (measured by statistical significance) for citizen and membership groups rather than institutions and associations or economic groups. While previous studies have shown cross-sectional differences arising from the initiative process, this constitutes the first direct test of the differences in dynamics implied by the theory of initiative mobilizations.

The findings also demonstrate one conseqeunce of these different dynamics in the form of a different rate of interest group uniqueness in initiative states: a greater proportion of groups in initiative states are not registered in any other state. As noted however, the effect is substantively smaller for citizen and membership groups, contrary to expectations. Upon reflection, however, these results are perhaps not surprising. As (Wolak et al. 2002) note, institutions are the driving force behind uniqueness. This is likely due to the greater hurdle for mobilization posed by the collective action problem for citizen and membership groups. Once they have mobilized, it may be easier to expand into other states rather than to mobilize a distinct group. The data are consistent with this: citizen groups register in 1.8 states on average, compared to 1.6 states for economic groups, while membership groups have an average of 2.2 registrations compared to 1.4 for institutions and two for associations.

Overall, these findings enhance our understanding of the consequences of the initiative process for interest group politics. Not only are there more groups in initiative states, as previously

demonstrated, but the identities of those groups are changing faster. Interest group populations in initiative states are therefore less stable over time, with fewer long-standing, experienced groups in the mix. With greater rates of turnover, the initiative process may engender more responsive, and possibly even more representative, interest group populations. Over the time period studied, for example, the proportion of membership groups decreased three percent in both types of states, but the different dynamics allowed them to catch up a little as an overall proportion of groups: the ratio of membership groups to institutions dropped from .48 to .34 in noninitiative states, but only dropped from .46 to .35 in initiative states (excluding Mississippi entirely). This is due to the fact that both a larger proportion of total registrations and a larger proportion of new registrations by membership and citizen groups are in initiative states: 53.3% of all registrations and 54.3% of new registrations by citizen groups are in initiative states whereas 51.8% of allregistrations and the same proportion of new registrations by economic groups are in initiative states. Thus the different dynamics in initiative states have helped membership groups stem their losses vis-à-vis institutions, the growth of which during the 1990s is one of the major changes in state interest group populations (Gray and Lowery 2001*b*).

Of course, this shifting landscape may make it more difficult for legislators to rely on interest groups or to form long-term relationships with specific interests. States with more professionalized legislatures have smaller exit rates, suggesting that consistent interaction increases stability. And while the effect was not significant for the proportion of new registrants, decreased exit rates should make it harder for groups to enter, leading to a slower evolution of interest communities in professionalized states. The initiative process appears to be one way to overcome this rigidity. Whether this leads to enhanced representatation overall, however, can not be directly addressed with these data.

While space prevents me from presenting analyses of the twenty-six different subpopulations, some interesting patterns emerge. A comparison of the average exit and entry rates produces a few that have significant differences (at the .10 level or better): civil rights, tax and transportation groups have lower exit rates, while military and small business groups have greater exit rates; agricultural, communications, construction, education, legal, and small business groups have greater entry rates, while tax groups have lower entry rates. The effect on tax groups is interesting in light of the particular role the initiative has played in tax policy since Proposition 13 and the ensuing tax revolt. The results for civil rights groups could be related both to initiatives targeting minority groups and to initiatives related to Indian gaming (Native American interests are included in this category). Future research may be able to tie these differences together in a way that is sensitive to the context of the associated issue in state politics, including the role of the initiative process in setting the agenda and shaping the debate, as well as further exploring the consequences of increased interest community volatility for initiative state politics.

Notes

[1]For more information on the history and current practice of the initiative process, see Cronin (1989), Ellis (2002) or Magleby (1984).

[2]For evidence consistent with the prediction that policy outcomes are different in the presence of the initiative process, see (Boehmke 2005*a*; Gerber 1999; Matsusaka 2004), though see Edward L. Lascher, Hagen and Rochlin (1996) for less supportive evidence.

[3]These studies rely on lobbying registrations to measure the size of state interest group populations. A study by Lowry (2005) examines four categories of tax-exempt organizations finds no effect of the initiative process. This may be due to the fact that while the initiative process is inherently political, tax-exempt status limits the extent and type of political activities in which groups can engage.

[4]Most, but not all, studies find that membership groups are more volatile. Schlozman's (1984) data on Washington D.C. groups in 1960 and 1980 indicates that public interest groups and civil rights groups have the lowest survival rates; corporations, professional and business associations have higher survival rates; and women and senior citizens' groups have the highest survival rate. In his study of associations, Walker (1991, p. 64) finds that associations from the profit sector had slightly lower exit rates than citizen groups. Gray and Lowery's state-level data lead to the opposite conclusion, however, with membership groups and associations having a higher survival rate from 1980 to 1990 (Gray and Lowery 1996, pp. 116-120).

[5]Recent studies of government activity within an issue area show that areas with greater government activity attract more interest groups, whether measured at the Federal level with com-

mittee hearings (Leech et al. 2005) or at the state level with bill introductions (Lowery et al. 2004).

[6]Registration laws vary a fair bit from state to state (see, e.g., Gray and Lowery 1998; Opheim 1991); this could pose a problem for my analysis if this variation is both related to the presence of the initiative process and affects the rate at which groups enter and exit lobbying rolls. Merely changing the number of groups registered would not pose a problem if exit and entry are unaffected. In any case, tests of the relationship between registration laws and registration numbers do not find a significant relationship (Gray and Lowery 1996, 1998, Appendix 1).

[7]Specifically, I included all groups from the Civil Rights, Environment, Good Government, Military, Welfare and Women categories; membership groups from the Government, Health, Hotel, Manufacturing, Religious, Natural Resources, Small Business, Sports, Tax, Transportation and Utilities categories; and associations from the religious and tax categories. I included these categories because they appeared to have a high proportion of groups with open memberships or labor unions, while avoiding categories with high proportions of trade associations (based on the names of the groups).

[8]As Gray and Lowery (2001*a*) note, groups may fail to register and yet not cease to exist — the concepts of entry or birth and exit or death refer to registrations, not the fate of organizations. In general, though, membership groups and associations that exit often perish as organizations as well while institutions do so less often.

[9]In constructing the measures of exit and entry I treat Mississippi as an initiative state since it adopted the initiative process in 1992. The results are not substantially changed by excluding it.

[10]Annual exit rates are calculated as follows. Since .585 of groups exit, .415 of groups remain after seven years. If the size of the population decreases at a constant rate, this implies that $.882 =$

$.415^{1/7}$ groups remain after one year. Thus .118 groups exit each year. As Gray and Lowery (1996) note, however, it is probably the case that younger groups exhibit greater exit rates, implying that these estimates may be conservative since they miss groups that enter and quickly exit over the seven-year period.

[11]Entry rates are determined by taking the sum of the exit rates and the net growth rates per year, since the net change in groups is the difference between the entry rate and the exit rate.

[12]See Tolbert, Lowenstein and Donovan (1998) for a discussion of these various regulations.

[13]If I do include them both, the use variable is never significant while the initiative indicator generally retains its significance. I measure use with a three-year average of measures on the ballot.

[14]Besides the various works cited herein by Gray and Lowery and their associates, see also work by Nownes (2004) and Nownes and Lipinski (2005).

[15]Data on government expenditures taken from the *Statistical Abstract of the States*.

[16]Data on current GSP are taken from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' website at `http://www.bea.gov`. Nominal values deflated using the the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

[17]I also tried this using the percent change in GSP, but found that that had less explanatory power.

[18]Specifically, I estimated a negative binomial model of total groups in 1990 with the following independent variables: the initiative process, GSP, GSP^2, government expenditures normalized

by GSP, state ideology and divided government and a Florida indicator variable. I then calculated $(Y_i - E[Y_i|X_i])/E[Y_i|X_i])$.

[19]Because measures of the economic and citizen group totals using the current categorization are not available for 1990, I use the residual from a model of the number of groups in those categories using the coding in Boehmke (2002).

[20]Despite the fact that the rise and decline in Florida's interest group population is consistent with the ESA model due to the increase in energy in this period, including a control for it is common in the literature (Boehmke 2002, 2005*a*; Gray and Lowery 1996, 2001*a*,*b*). In most cases including this variable weakens the results; I discuss specific instances when it may affect my conclusions later.

[21]The results all hold up under OLS regression, though OLS models estimated on grouped data suffer from a variety of problems including nonsensical predictions outside the zero-one range as well as inducing heteroskedasticity. See Greene (1993) or Maddala (1983) for more information on grouped logit.

[22]Continuous variables are changed from one standard deviation below their mean to one above it.

[23]The problem with modeling entry rates is that they require information about the proportion of groups that could have formed that did form. What we observe from year to year are the numbers of groups that exit and enter.

[24]The results for economic and citizen groups are also significant using the original coding.

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Table 1: Characteristics of State Interest Group Registrations, 1990 and 1997

		Total		Exiting by 1997		New in 1997		Unique in 1997	
		1990	1997	#	%	#	%	#	%
All Groups	Init.	680.4†	723.9	418.2	58.5%†	485.6	65.3%	401.6	51.8%††
	Noninit.	507.1	656.9	290.1	54.4%	424.5	63.7%	332.2	47.1%
Membership	Init.	158.1†	146.3	89.6	52.5%††	83.4††	56.6%†	57.5	36.5%††
	Noninit.	113.0	126.4	54.1	43.5%	64.0	52.1%	44.3	32.3%
Institutions	Init.	347.5†	417.8	228.0	63.4%††	310.7	73.2%	274.6	62.6%
	Noninit.	236.4	379.0	147.1	58.8%	282.5	73.3%	227.7	56.8%
Associations	Init.	173.0	160.2	99.1	54.2%	91.8	55.3%†	68.3	39.4%††
	Noninit.	157.7	150.9	88.9	54.5%	77.5	51.5%	59.6	36.8%
Economic	Init.		571.2			386.1	65.5%	318.3	51.9%††
	Noninit.		524.5			344.4	64.3%	266.6	47.2%
Citizen	Init.		142.0			89.3†	62.1%	71.2	47.2%†
	Noninit.		123.2			71.2	59.1%	56.3	42.8%

N=50. Source: See text for information on coding and sources. Daggers indicates that the average in initiative states is significantly different from the average of the same variable in noninitiative states using a one-tailed t test at the 0.05 (††) or 0.10 (†) levels. The differences between 1990 and 1997 population sizes are not equal to net entries due to the adoption of the initiative process in Mississippi in 1992.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics, 1997

	Mean	S.D.	Min.	Max.
New Groups	0.646	0.074	0.485	0.817
Unique Groups	0.492	0.080	0.358	0.662
Exit Rate	0.561	0.092	0.425	0.906
New Membership Groups	0.541	0.100	0.341	0.841
Unique Membership Groups	0.341	0.085	0.170	0.579
Membership Groups Exit Rate	0.482	0.144	0.206	0.947
New Institutions	0.736	0.059	0.585	0.866
Unique Institutions	0.593	0.077	0.431	0.724
Institutions Exit Rate	0.608	0.090	0.441	0.884
New Associations	0.536	0.093	0.326	0.803
Unique Associations	0.380	0.074	0.208	0.588
Associations Exit Rate	0.542	0.103	0.388	0.924
New Economic Groups	0.651	0.074	0.491	0.813
Unique Economic Groups	0.493	0.08	0.343	0.663
New Citizen Groups	0.607	0.087	0.419	0.833
Unique Citizen Groups	0.448	0.086	0.279	0.637
Group/GSP, 1990	0.910	0.742	0.169	2.981
Membership Groups/GSP, 1990	0.231	0.220	0.034	0.981
Institutions/GSP, 1990	0.405	0.322	0.086	1.431
Associations/GSP, 1990	0.274	0.233	0.046	0.927
Economic Groups/GSP, 1990	0.624	0.477	0.107	2.179
Citizen Groups/GSP, 1990	0.253	0.244	0.044	1.080
Initiative State	0.479	0.505	0.000	1.000
Gross State Product	0.140	0.157	0.013	0.850
GSP squared	0.044	0.115	0.000	0.723
Government expenditures	0.167	0.027	0.048	0.222
Ideology	−0.143	0.075	−0.280	−0.002
Legislative Professionalism	0.249	0.152	0.030	0.900
Divided Government	0.646	0.483	0.000	1.000
Change in GSP, 1990-1997	0.021	0.020	0.000	0.107
Change in Gov't Expenditures, 1990-1997	0.079	0.018	0.021	0.126

N=48. See text for information on coding and sources. New and unique groups are proportions calculated in 1997 relative to all groups registered in 1997. Exit rates are the proportion of 1990 groups not registered in 1997.

Table 3: Grouped Logit Analysis of Proportion of Interest Groups Exiting Between 1990 and 1997

	All Groups	Membership	Institutions	Associations
Initiative	0.138	0.375 **	0.100	−0.032
	(0.102)	(0.185)	(0.100)	(0.114)
Change in GSP	2.471	−0.387	2.736	1.311
	(2.402)	(4.757)	(2.093)	(3.073)
Change in Gov't Exp.	−1.257	−3.367	−0.671	−1.007
	(2.869)	(5.010)	(2.812)	(3.353)
Ideology	1.603 **	1.938	1.134*	1.874 **
	(0.697)	(1.180)	(0.671)	(0.859)
Legislative Professionalism	−0.739 **	−1.236 **	−0.578*	−0.549
	(0.322)	(0.570)	(0.312)	(0.378)
Florida	2.008 **	3.066 **	1.482 **	2.445 **
	(0.252)	(0.575)	(0.215)	(0.371)
Excess Groups, 1990 (Same Group Type)	0.191	0.478 **	0.107	0.037
	(0.149)	(0.209)	(0.130)	(0.196)
Groups/GSP, 1990 (Same Group Type)	−0.022	−0.476	0.156	−0.086
	(0.095)	(0.531)	(0.221)	(0.347)
Constant	0.657 **	0.691	0.647 **	0.645*
	(0.283)	(0.486)	(0.280)	(0.322)
R^2	0.70	0.54	0.71	0.57

N=48. Standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed significance tests: * Significantly different from zero at the 0.10 level; ** at the 0.05 level.

Table 4: Grouped Logit Analysis of Proportion of Interest Groups in 1997 that Were not Registered in 1990

	All Groups	Membership	Institutions	Associations	Economic	Citizen
Initiative	$0.198**$	$0.301**$	0.129	$0.228**$	$0.179*$	$0.274**$
	(0.094)	(0.107)	(0.094)	(0.095)	(0.093)	(0.102)
Change in GSP	$4.857**$	-0.819	$4.807**$	3.335	$5.489**$	-1.518
	(2.085)	(2.614)	(1.854)	(2.429)	(2.042)	(2.498)
Change in Gov't Exp.	-3.865	-3.683	-4.381	-0.511	-3.516	$-5.187*$
	(2.713)	(2.896)	(2.759)	(2.789)	(2.744)	(2.750)
Ideology	-0.497	-1.161	-0.312	-0.292	-0.433	-0.796
	(0.652)	(0.713)	(0.641)	(0.705)	(0.652)	(0.694)
Legislative Professionalism	-0.382	-0.300	-0.440	-0.375	-0.421	-0.191
	(0.295)	(0.316)	(0.299)	(0.302)	(0.294)	(0.309)
Florida	0.277	$1.488**$	-0.276	$1.043**$	0.179	$1.082**$
	(0.271)	(0.371)	(0.239)	(0.327)	(0.261)	(0.324)
Excess Groups, 1990	-0.132	-0.104	-0.109	$-0.284*$	-0.183	-0.039
	(0.139)	(0.130)	(0.124)	(0.165)	(0.150)	(0.109)
Groups/GSP, 1990	$-0.161*$	$-0.598*$	-0.291	-0.470	$-0.255*$	$-0.596**$
	(0.090)	(0.315)	(0.219)	(0.287)	(0.140)	(0.278)
Constant	$0.915**$	0.356	$1.449**$	0.181	$0.944**$	$0.822**$
	(0.266)	(0.283)	(0.271)	(0.271)	(0.270)	(0.268)
R^2	0.39	0.49	0.37	0.47	0.41	0.43

N=48. Standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed significance tests: * Significantly different from zero at the 0.10 level; ** at the 0.05 level.

Table 5: Grouped Logit Analysis of Proportion of 1997 Registrations that are Unique

	All Groups	Membership	Institutions	Associations	Economic	Citizen
Initiative	$0.212**$	0.142	$0.263**$	0.095	$0.215**$	$0.145*$
	(0.075)	(0.086)	(0.085)	(0.061)	(0.077)	(0.086)
GSP	$2.139**$	$2.205**$	$1.329*$	$1.789**$	$2.057**$	$1.624**$
	(0.596)	(0.702)	(0.660)	(0.491)	(0.603)	(0.721)
GSP - squared	-1.165	-0.133	-0.652	-0.623	-1.107	-0.451
	(0.703)	(0.803)	(0.785)	(0.572)	(0.714)	(0.829)
Gov't Exp.	-0.906	$3.794*$	-1.788	0.516	-1.255	1.042
	(1.700)	(1.916)	(1.976)	(1.338)	(1.750)	(1.921)
Ideology	0.425	$1.561**$	0.181	$1.160**$	0.309	$1.386**$
	(0.575)	(0.649)	(0.659)	(0.472)	(0.589)	(0.667)
Legislative Prof.	-0.341	$-1.198**$	-0.269	-0.289	-0.305	-0.481
	(0.423)	(0.474)	(0.489)	(0.338)	(0.432)	(0.493)
Constant	-0.035	$-1.124**$	0.565	$-0.583**$	0.012	-0.298
	(0.305)	(0.350)	(0.348)	(0.245)	(0.312)	(0.350)
R^2	0.54	0.60	0.36	0.68	0.52	0.46

N=48. Standard errors in parentheses. Two-tailed significance tests: * Significantly different from zero at the 0.10 level; ** at the 0.05 level.