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Policy Making Is Decision Making: A Response to Hattam

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How should we explain politics and policymaking in one of the most tumultuous and active periods in the history of the American state? Victoria Hattam and I approach the same topic from different starting points and with different goals. While she argues for attention to grass roots mobilization, I look to the policymaking process. I believe the study of policy change should begin at the center of power, where policy decision-making takes place, and should assume nothing about the relevance or role of the political grass roots. Policymakers themselves are always part of the story of policymaking. Grass roots groups are sometimes key actors, yet their impact on policymaking must be demonstrated, not assumed. Assessing this impact and understanding policy development also requires examining cases of failure along with cases of success, and I believe Hattam's neglect of the comparative framework in my book leads her analysis astray.

In this article, I use the occasion of Hattam's eloquent and engaging critique to bring attention to larger issues of general concern to all scholars studying political change. I first explain the purpose of *The Minority Rights Revolution* (henceforth, *MRR*), responding to some of Hattam's charges. Second, I provide a theoretical background and justification for *MRR*'s "top-down" research design. Third, I analyze Hattam's alternative approach and assess it. Last, I turn to the questions of politics and morality that are necessarily part of any scholar's work studying policy change.

EXPLAINING THE "RARE AMERICAN EPIPHANY"

Hattam's analysis rests on the notion that *MRR* is about the irrelevance of minority protest groups and their activities. Although mistaken, this critique is not surprising to me. Telling the story of disadvantaged groups in the 1960s and 1970s with reference to white men in suits is sure to provoke those who are used to thinking of that period as one of protest – *effective* protest – especially if one took part in those protests. Focusing on the suits (and Republican suits, no less) seems to imply that social protest did not, and does not, matter. This was not at all my intention. The book's message about protest is different: protest is necessary sometimes, but not all the time, and different groups meet different degrees of resistance to their goals.

Hattam takes the heart of the book to be Chapter 4, which explains the expansion of affirmative action, and states that the book is about how some groups became "minorities." Although Chapter 4 addresses that important topic, the book is about more than that, and about more than the impact of social movements. It is about the development of the policies to guarantee rights for minorities. I defined the minority rights revolution as the sudden growth of law, regulations, and court decisions that established nondiscrimination rights for groups that policymakers saw as disadvantaged but that were now defined by social class (*MRR*, 4). The book is intended to explain this policy revolution, which occurred mostly between 1965 and 1975. It lays out several puzzles that need to be explained: the timing of the revolution, its bipartisan nature, its speed, and its limited expansion in terms of groups included.

Part of the answer to the question of timing comes from the creation of the post-World War II global human rights culture and America's strategic interests during that period. During and after World War II, nations of the world came to a near-consensus on the value of the human right to nondiscrimination, especially the right to be treated without regard to race. The United States made this a centerpiece of its ratio-

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nale for going to war with the Nazis, and the nondiscrimination right was institutionalized in the United Nations. Cold War competition reinforced this right as the United States and the USSR competed for the allegiance of emerging nations in Africa and Asia; America had a strategic interest in supporting nondiscrimination rights at home to combat first Axis and then USSR propaganda. Growing U.N. membership of African and Asian nations augmented that propaganda by pushing nondiscrimination issues onto that organization's main agenda. A combination of factors, including black civil rights movement activity and these global pressures, finally led to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as well as the Immigration Act of 1965, which ended national-origin discrimination in admissions. The stage was set for the revolution.

I argue that the Civil Rights Act had three important effects: it legitimized political targeting of minorities with policy designed to aid them, it provided a model for future civil rights laws (later extended to women in education and the disabled), and it established government agencies that gave real policymaking power to persons with a concern for minorities. Based on perceptions of group meanings and cultural categories, administrators and White House officials began to establish a framework for expanding minority rights to those groups they saw as analogous to blacks. Lawmakers saw different meanings in different groups, thus categorizing them in different ways, and creating limits and resistance to policy expansion for groups they saw as different from blacks. Along these lines, the book explains the rapid expansion of employment affirmative action, minority capitalism affirmative action and procurement "set-asides," and university admissions affirmative action to include Latinos, American Indians, and usually Asian Americans, the slower development of employment affirmative action for women, bilingual education and language rights in the schools primarily for Latinos, women's equality in education (Title IX), and disability rights (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973). It also shows negative cases: white ethnics mobilized and lobbied to be included in affirmative action and failed, and gays/lesbians mobilized for basic nondiscrimination rights and failed.

Policymakers' perceptions of groups are at the center of the analysis of a period that Hugh Graham appropriately called the "rare American epiphany."[1] I can see no other way to explain why they immediately considered Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians to be minorities, resisted women for a few years, and ultimately refused to see white ethnics and gays/lesbians as minorities despite histories of discrimination and political mobilization. The driving forces for policy included both political parties' interests in votes, agency legitimacy, and justice goals, the latter desired by many activists who held power in the agencies, Congress, or the White House. However, the shape and tempo of politics flowed from these perceived meanings and categorizations.

I do not claim that nonblack minorities were "politically quiescent." My argument is that we cannot explain the speed and timing of the minority rights revolution by focusing on the activities of social movement organizations. In other words, the hypothesis that the minority rights revolution can be explained by social movement strength is almost certainly incorrect. For this to be correct, the groups that won recognition and policy most quickly (Latinos, Asians, and American Indians) would have to be stronger and more active than women (whose victories came later and were resisted more), white ethnics and gays/lesbians (who failed). This is obviously not the case, especially when we consider Asian American mobilization compared with mobilization of women and even white ethnics, and gays/lesbians. Again, the point is not that Asian Americans were politically inactive, but that their mobilization on the federal issues I examined was less than these other groups. Moreover, I was careful to show in the book specifically what minority advocates were demanding when they did communicate with the government in letters or meetings. Latinos were most active, but they gave low priority to affirmative action and bilingual education before enactment of these policies, and instead expressed concerns with government jobs and recognition in White House conferences. Finally, even when there was grass roots mobilization and protest by nonblack minorities, it was local, and the federal policymakers normally evinced little or no awareness of it. In fact, in the case of bilingual education/language rights, I describe some of this local, activity, such as Mexican American protests or demands directed at local schools (in East Los Angeles in 1963 and 1968, in Abilene, Texas, in 1969, and in Crystal City, Texas, also in 1969), even though policymakers never mentioned this activity as reasons for their action (*MRR*, 196, 421).

Rather than argue that nonblack minorities were politically quiescent, I show that they did not mobilize on anything near the scale of African Americans, and did not have their mobilization repressed in comparably violent ways. Nonetheless, their lower levels of activity sometimes translated into relatively spectacular policy gains. To me, the exciting and surprising thing about this policy revolution was that these previously neglected groups did not need comparable mass mobilization to win inclusion in policy. This is not a moral judgment. It is, I believe, what the historical record tells us.

So what role did these social movement organizations play between 1965 and 1975? Policy elites often anticipated group demands or constituency preferences, and acted before the groups did. Sometimes, policymakers responded after just a few meetings;

1. Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil Rights Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 476.

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sometimes organizations played crucial roles in getting already enacted policies implemented. Although Hattam criticizes *MRR* for presenting the decade's politics as a "zero-sum game," I know of no other way to describe a situation where several worthy causes were chasing space in tiny civil rights enforcement budgets. The EEOC and Office for Civil Rights were both saddled with huge caseloads, meager budgets, and small staffs mostly committed – at first – to helping only blacks. I describe Latino organizations' efforts to get the attention of initially uninterested (even derisive) EEOC administrators (*MRR*, 119–24). Strangely, Latino organizations did not strongly or clearly demand affirmative action; mostly, they demanded respect and positions at the EEOC. This inchoate pressure activity succeeded when the EEOC gave Latinos more attention; however, the effort was aided by the fact that the EEOC's "EEO-1" minority-counting forms, developed to measure discrimination and effectively use limited resources, included them already. Women's groups fought hard to have their formal inclusion on the EEO-1 translated into results at both the EEOC (*MRR*, 111–19) and the Labor Department's affirmative action (*MRR*, 130–41). On the other hand, I could not find a shred of evidence showing Latino, Asian American, or American Indian groups having anything to do with their inclusion in the Labor Department's affirmative action regulations. Policymakers also expanded minority capitalism affirmative action without pressure to do so (*MRR*, chap. 5).

In Chapter 7, I show that it was primarily the National Education Association (NEA), and not Latino organizations, that put bilingual education on the federal agenda. The NEA's leadership and the amazing cooperation of Democratic and Republican members of Congress led to enactment of the Bilingual Education Act only one year later. After enactment, however, Mexican American organizations played crucial roles in writing implementation guidelines for the new law. Regarding the right to language accommodation in the schools, the two key administrators independently told me that the regulation they wrote came about after just a few meetings with some Latino leaders, not because of mass or grass roots mobilization (*MRR*, 213). Latino organizations played a greater role in writing follow-up regulations and encouraging enforcement.

In Chapter 8, I detail how women members of Congress explicitly asked women's groups *not* to lobby for the bill that quietly became the innocuously named Title IX. Here, I also show the efforts of the National Organization for Women and the Women's Equity Action League, over a period of three years and facing much greater resistance than did advocates for bilingual education, to have implementing regulations actually written and enforced.

The narrative's lack of emphasis on activity by grass roots minority organizations is supported by much of the literature that Hattam argues should have formed the foundation of my analysis. Mexican-American organizations, for example, were the strongest representatives of the three minority groups Hattam says I ignored, but Latino scholars are almost unanimous in describing even the most significant of the organizations as in fact very small, not well organized, poor, focused almost exclusively on local issues, and mired in conflict with each other.[2] It is simply incorrect to say I ignored these works (some of those that Hattam lists did not exist when I sent in the final manuscript). Juan Gómez-Quiñones is a star support to the analysis (see, for example, *MRR*, 388–89), there are numerous Latino scholars in the notes for the bilingual education chapter (*MRR*, 414–20), and I used Pycior's work extensively. Espiritu's important book shows up in the chapter on university admissions (*MRR*, 407), and in the conclusion, where I use her point, also made by Felix Padilla, that affirmative action played a crucial role in creating group consciousness, rather than the other way around (*MRR*, 457).[3]

Hattam's analysis (and her alternative program, discussed below) are hampered by a failure to consider the negative cases that are absolutely essential to my argument. Throughout my book, the crucial distinction made is that between officially-designated minorities (blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, American Indians, and women and the disabled of all races and ethnicities) and white ethnics and gays/lesbians, the two groups that mobilized for inclusion in minority rights policies but failed to be included. Hattam does not mention these groups at all in her essay, has no account

2. Benjamin Márquez, *LULAC: The Evolution of a Mexican American Political Organization* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 71, 117–18; Juan Gómez-Quiñones, *Chicano Politics: Reality and Promise, 1940–1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 68, 92–93; 141–46; Mario Barrera, *Beyond Aztlan: Ethnic Autonomy in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Praeger, 1985), 14; Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos,* 3d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 314.

3. Other scholars Hattam says I "completely ignored" include Ronald Takaki (cited on 374) and Ian Haney Lopez (388). Hattam appears to be suggesting that I ignored works by Latino or Asian American scholars, a charge which is certainly unfair. Works she does not mention that I consulted on the history of nonblack racial oppression include Hyung-chan Kim, *A Legal History of Asian Americans, 1790–1990* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), cited on 373; Gabriel Chin, "The Civil Rights Revolution Comes to Immigration Law: A New Look at the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965," *North Carolina Law Review* 75 (1996): 273–345, cited several times in the notes for chaps. 2 and 10; Shih-san Henry Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), cited on 375; Alonso S. Perales, *Are We Good Neighbors?* (1948; New York: Arno Press, 1974), cited on 389; Dana Y. Takagi, *The Retreat from Race: Asian-American Admissions and Racial Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), cited on 410; Jose E. Vega, *Education, Politics and Bilingualism in Texas* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1983), cited several times in the notes for chap. 7; Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *"Let All of Them Take Heed": Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910–1981* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), cited on 415; and Rubén Donato, *The Other Struggle for Equal Schools: Mexican Americans during the Civil Rights Era* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), cited on 415.

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to explain why their mobilization failed, and instead makes a point to criticize a distinction that I do not make. At *no point* do I describe or use the terms "legitimate" and "illegitimate" minorities, and a word search of the computer files of the chapters does not reveal a single usage of the word "interloper," though Hattam uses these terms repeatedly in her review essay. Although Hattam is correct that I consider African Americans the original focus of government attention and use a narrative of expansion or extension, the point of the analysis is to explain policymaking speed, inclusion and exclusion, and this distinction draws the most prominent line between white ethnics and gays/lesbians (excluded groups) as compared to the other included groups. Moreover, I am far from alone in treating blacks as a unique and special case in American history. Other scholars make this point, including some of those that Hattam cites.[4]

Hattam's critique is most forceful when she claims that *MRR* does not consider in depth the histories of oppression against Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians. There are two main reasons for this. The first is admittedly a weak defense: the book manuscript was too long, and I was continually cutting, including one read-through that shaved off 20,000 words.[5] The second is more theoretical: the book explores factors that I could show affected and shaped the policymaking process. This strategy does not imply a denial of the existence of racism for other groups; rather, it puts attention on elite perceptions and decision-making and their impact on the policymaking and racial formation process. I regret not bringing in more or giving prominent place to stories of actual racial oppression as experienced by members of the groups to give some context, but to do so might have given the misleading impression that policymakers themselves were aware of this oppression.[6] Some of them were, at least in a vague, hazy sense. Perceptions of past oppression were part of what made the black analogy work for some but not others. This I show in the story of white ethnics. Government officials continually told them or their advocates in Congress that they did not qualify for affirmative action because their groups had not suffered as much as the official minorities (they denied the black analogy to gays for moral reasons, *MRR*, chap. 9).

The superficial treatment of these histories of oppression in the book matches what I believe existed in the minds of the policymakers. This is a reasonable conclusion: since the 1960s, scholars have written extensively with the specific objective to raise awareness of this racial oppression. They assume that few know about it. I therefore treated the black analogy as a cognitive connection between groups in the minds of policymakers, Democrat and Republican alike, that they themselves did not clearly examine, or even understand.[7] I show how the black analogy operated in the creation of the minority rights revolution, and trace its history to at least the 1947 report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights (*MRR*, 91–92). What was striking to me was that even in 1947, so close in time to the severe discrimination faced by white ethnics, government officials already excluded them from the black analogy, except for a few mentions of Jewish Americans. I will leave it to other scholars to show how this cognitive map formed, but I suspect it has something to do with policy elites' growing perception of ethnics as white, a status denied to the other groups (despite Hattam's claims that the government views Latinos as an ethnic group and not a racial one; more on that below).[8]

WHY FOCUS ON ELITES?

The focus on elites in *MRR* is based not on moral or ideological commitments but on a theoretical agenda. For years, I have been deeply impressed by elitist and neo-Marxist theories of the state. Though all arguing from different points of view, authors such as C. Wright Mills, Ralph Miliband, Nicos Poulantzas, and G. William Domhoff presented images of American politics as profoundly undemocratic.[9] These works remain compelling and useful starting points for thinking about state behavior. As Domhoff points

4. The logic of Claire Kim's argument of the "triangulation" of Korean Americans is that blacks are at the bottom of the American racial order, with Koreans in between whites and blacks. Claire Jean Kim, *Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Also see Nadia Y. Kim, "Guests in Someone Else's House?: Korean Immigrants in Los Angeles Negotiate American Race, Nationhood, and Identity" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2004); Barbara Fields, "Whiteness, Racism, and Identity," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (2001): 48–56; Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth* (1981; Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

5. Left on the cutting room floor was a section for chap. 2 on how WWII and the Cold War aided the struggle for equal rights for Latinos, a section that Hattam would have undoubtedly preferred be maintained and highlighted. I cut that section, however, because it rested on weak evidence – just a few quotes from some early Latino leaders that seemed to me unconvincing.

6. Besides statistics of Latino underachievement in schools discussed in Congress or by the NEA (190), I only mention Latino school segregation in a footnote, pointing out that court rulings on it did not serve as a precedent for bilingual education (416 n.90). Unfortunately, discussion of school segregation of Asian Americans did not make it into the final manuscript at all, and I regret this neglect.

7. Certainly there are some exceptions, such as Leon Panetta (*MRR*, 212).

8. On transitions to whiteness see, among others, David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991), Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

9. C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956); G. William Domhoff, *The Powers That Be* (New York: Random House, 1978); Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (London: Winfield and Nicholson, 1969); Nicos Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes* (1968; London: New Left Books, 1974).

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out most clearly, our government officials are indeed fantastically wealthy, they are greatly influenced by business interests, and there is a revolving door between Big Business and the federal government.[10] Acknowledging this reality, it becomes especially interesting that the state does *not* act (at least in an obvious way) in the interests of the ruling class. Why are there government policies to help the disadvantaged at all? If the ruling class rules, why do they care at all about the disadvantaged? One answer is the need for state legitimacy, but that says nothing about the quantity, target, or shape of policies to help the disadvantaged. Sometimes the disadvantaged do win in American politics. Even if we allow for periods of retrenchment since the 1980s, it is still the case that the state is larger and more active for the disadvantaged in 2000 than it was in 1900. How can this be?

This starting point made the minority rights revolution an obvious and compelling area for study. There were other factors that made it especially puzzling. As stated above, the policies were many; their development rapid. They often specifically targeted their disadvantaged beneficiaries in an open, unabashed way, and were often *exclusive*. That is, rich, white men were falling over themselves trying to develop policies to help weak groups, and the men making these policies categorically excluded themselves and their kind from benefits. Of course, as I show – and it is an important part of the story – there were often women policymakers who were very much involved, and a handful of other policymaking minorities, helping eliminate the need for mass mobilization or lobbying. But the most important seats of power were all occupied by rich, white men. Their decisions were necessary.

The other factor pointing to a top-down narrative is the so-called "state-centered" approach to explaining politics most often associated with Theda Skocpol. Her starting point was more Weber than Marx, and the result was to remove the hint of conspiracy in neo-Marxism. Skocpol would treat the state as an entity, and an actor, in its own right, and one of great consequence.[11]

Skocpol's approach, first fully elaborated in *States and Social Revolutions*, was proudly "structural" and – at first – left little room for culture.[12] Structures were "patterned relationships beyond the manipulative control of any single group or individual."[13] There was little attention paid to world-views and perceptions of state actors, which is not surprising. A revolution is an event that occurs against the intentions of those in power. Explaining a regime collapse requires explaining how the social world falls out of the control of state elites.

Skocpol and several like-minded social scientists, including Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Peter Evans, Charles Tilly, and Ira Katznelson, among others, then brought the state-centered approach more squarely into the explanation of everyday political behavior.[14] They maintained the structural focus, which soon came to be called, and melded into, a long-standing approach in political science: institutionalism, or more specifically, historical institutionalism.[15] Influential publications followed,[16] including the founding of this journal, and talented new students came forth, often showcased in a series published by Princeton University Press.[17]

Yet an almost purely structural/institutional, state-centered approach could not be sustained in the study of policymaking. One development was to expand the focus beyond the state; for example, Skocpol and later Christopher Howard began to tout a more catholic "polity-centered" approach which brought interest groups or social movements more squarely into the analysis.[18] But a less-promoted, though equally significant, development also began to take place: attention to the cultural logic of American politics and policymaking, and the world-views of policymakers.

Although Skocpol herself did not make much of it in *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (I always do when I cite this work), much of her analysis hinges on elite perceptions of which groups are worthy of government attention. She states, "Institutional and cultural oppositions between the morally 'deserving' and the less deserving run like fault lines through the entire history of American social provision."[19] These sorts of arguments, sometimes only implicit in the

10. Domhoff, *Powers That Be*.

11. The piece I read as an undergraduate, and which still stands as a model of social science argument, is Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," *Politics and Society* 10 (1980): 155–202.

12. Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

13. For an excellent elaboration in response to a culturalist's challenge, see Theda Skocpol, "Cultural Idioms and Political Ideologies in the Revolutionary Reconstruction of State Power: A Rejoinder to Sewell," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (1985): 87.

14. Peter Evans, Dietrich Reuschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

15. The classic modern statement is Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

16. Margaret Weir, Ann Shola Orloff, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *The Politics of Social Policy in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth, eds., *Structuring Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

17. The series is Ira Katznelson, Martin Shefter, and Theda Skocpol, eds., "Princeton Studies in American Politics: Historical, International and Comparative Perspectives."

18. Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Christopher Howard, *The Invisible Welfare State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999). Also see Edwin Amenta, *Bold Relief: Institutional Politics and the Origins of Modern American Social Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

19. Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers*, 149.

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analysis, play especially large roles when racial politics come into focus.[20] For example, though he does not state it explicitly, Paul Frymer's historical analysis of the role of race in American party politics is, in effect, a brief arguing for the importance of elites' perceptions of African Americans and their view of nonblack voters' very negative reactions to policies designed to help African Americans.[21] Similarly, both Jill Quadagno and Robert Lieberman emphasize the importance of institutional structures in explaining the relationship of African Americans to welfare policy, yet both of their books also give significant roles for race in decision-making about policy.[22] Elite perceptions play important roles here and elsewhere – as they must if we are to have full understanding of policymaking.[23]

My preferred approach has been to marry the elitist and neo-Marxist (especially Domhoff) emphasis on people and power, even allowing for some rational choice assumptions to creep into the model, with historical/structural institutionalism. It seems to me necessary to recognize the importance of institutions, but to base the narrative on the actions and agency of people, variously empowered or constrained by institutions and policy repertoires, and variously empowered or constrained by cultural categories, meanings and moral boundaries. Institutions and other cultural phenomena help us understand why rich, white, able-bodied men are doing things to help the poor, the nonwhite, the women, the disabled, etc., and why they choose particular policies.[24] Note that nothing in this approach precludes the possibility that the white males were responding to social movement or interest group pressure. Indeed, though starting in the state, this hypothesis is the first that I examine in each case in the book.

Even if social movements are the motive force in policymaking, social scientists must understand why those in power listen to them and respond favorably. Policymaking is decision-making. Though likely important parts of the story, it is not the decisions of the League of United Latin American Citizens, the National Organization for Women, the Japanese American Citizens League, or the Mexican American Political Association that lead to policy. They must bring their claims to the state. It is the state elites who operate the levers of policymaking machinery and decide which social movements get repressed or courted, and which policies are enacted and implemented. To understand policymaking, one needs to get inside the state, and more specifically, to get inside the heads of the state actors.

As much as possible, scholars should examine the *private,* behind-the-scenes communications of public officials.[25] For historical studies, we must go into the archives. Speeches and other public statements are important, but to understand the motives and worldviews behind policy and the logic of decision-making, it is the private communications that tell the most important story. If social movements or grass roots groups played a role, there should be evidence of their influence through communications with the government, the content of their demands, and in elite political strategy discourse.

But we should not rely only on the direct evidence. Strategic use of comparison, highlighting the presence or absence of various factors and outcomes, should also be used.[26] For example, in *MRR* (chap. 2), I examine the influence of the international context on policymaking by showing that though federal officials talked about the importance of combating foreign propaganda with equal rights legislation in the cases of black civil rights and immigration reform, the independent causal role of the international context is more compelling when we consider the immigration case, where there was no social movement activity and sometimes little lobbying, and no significant change in the electorate. The independent role of the international context is harder to prove in the case of black civil rights because in the years of expressed concern for the national security impact of severe racial discrimination, there were also great amounts of social movement activity and the "great migration" of blacks to the North, where they could vote.[27] Chapter 3 of my book shows that the main

20. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States,* 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

21. Paul Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances: Race and Party Competition in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

22. Jill Quadagno, *The Color of Welfare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Robert C. Lieberman, *Shifting the Color Line* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

23. Studies of elite perceptions and race are not limited to African Americans, of course. See for example Catherine Y. Lee, *Settling the Nation: Race, Gender, and Chinese and Japanese Immigration to the United States, 1870–1924* (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2003).

24. Others in sociology and political science have sought to combine cultural approaches with institutional studies, including Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Elisabeth Clemens, *The People's Lobby* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Steve M. Teles, *Whose Welfare?* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1996); Erik Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France: Ideas and Policymaking since the 1960s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and John D. Skrentny, *The Ironies of Affirmative Action* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

25. A new generation of state-centered sociologists appears to be going in this direction, getting inside the "black box" of the state to understand decision-making processes. Chris Bonastia, *Knocking on the Door: The Federal Government's Attempt to Desegregate the Suburbs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, forthcoming); Anthony S. Chen, "From Fair Employment to Equal Employment Opportunity and Beyond: Affirmative Action and the Politics of Civil Rights during the New Deal Order, 1941–1972" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2002); Robin Rogers-Dillon, *The Welfare Experiments* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Brian Steensland, "The Failed Welfare Revolution: Policy, Culture, and the Struggle for Guaranteed Income in the U.S., 1965–1980" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2002).

26. Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), chap. 3.

27. Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

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global human rights concern was race discrimination; there were no rights-national security linkages for women and the poor during the period. As I have indicated above, comparisons pointing to the presence or absence of different factors figure prominently in all the explanations offered in *MRR*.

AN ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATION?

Despite the forceful tenor of Hattam's critique, her alternative is not radically different from my own. Her view, as I read it, is that nonblack minorities were an important presence from the beginning, and that blacks were never the sole intended beneficiary of the groundbreaking Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although she explicitly does *not* advocate a movement-centered approach, she insists that nonblack movements played key, if unspecified, roles before and during 1964, situating them for inclusion in the minority rights revolution.

Hattam's argument represents a trend occurring simultaneously with the state-centered approaches discussed above yet moving in the opposite direction. While political sociology was joining political science in the cockpit of the state and enjoying the view from on high, and the state itself was enjoying unprecedented growth into new areas, historians were shunning the state and rushing toward grass roots social history.[28] This development was clear and quantifiable. As Hugh Davis Graham pointed out, about half of the program for the 1970 conference of the Organization of American Historians was devoted to papers offering various histories of the state and government officials. By 1972, that percentage had fallen to 28 percent. In that period, papers on various mostly disadvantaged social groups doubled to 66 percent. By the early 1990s, the pattern was the same, but even more skewed toward social history: 75 percent of the papers were social histories, and 12 percent focused on the state. Graham observed, "Thus while the state had grown like Leviathan, historical attention to it had withered."[29]

In fact, political history maintained a presence in leading universities. Political historians such as Graham, Alan Brinkley, Brian Balogh, and James Patterson continued to wield influence, and younger scholars such as Gareth Davies and Julian Zelizer joined the ranks. However, there was no denying that there was a new trend and a new energy in the field. Perhaps overcompensating for the neglect of the past, historians moved to history "from the bottom up," and to the social histories of precisely those disadvantaged groups most neglected (and also the subjects of *MRR*).[30] There was, and is, great value in this endeavor. Historians were able to show, for example, how marginalized groups were able to resist their oppression.[31] In studying politics outside the state, they were able to show the politics of the kitchen, the bedroom, and the shop floor.[32] But politics and political effects often were not the point; scholars produced excellent social histories of life as it existed at the margins, and even when examining the political struggles of social movement organizations, the point was frequently not to show causal impact.[33] In other words, these works, and this approach, were not originally intended to explain policy development.

Hattam's essay sits uncomfortably within state-centered historical institutionalism and the post-1970 "new social history." On the one hand, the state matters, and she lauds *MRR*'s attention to the politics of implementation. On the other, she is committed to, almost as orthodoxy, the tradition of the new social history. She wants to study, perhaps even celebrate, the role of grass roots organizations. Following a strategy used successfully in her past work on labor unions, she expects them to play a role in policymaking, and because of this intellectual or moral leaning, she is easily convinced of it.[34] She therefore does not explain in her essay the mechanism or logic through which local groups could influence the state.[35] Rather than a close examination of the private, behind-the-scenes arguments of state elites, she is satisfied with public statements, and she does not give this material much needed skeptical scrutiny.

First, consider the Civil Rights Act. Hattam's critique highlights a problem in my analysis: I do suggest (*MRR*, 90) that Congress had a single intention in

28. Mark H. Leff, "Revisioning U.S. Political History," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 829–53.

29. Hugh Davis Graham, "The Stunted Career of Policy History: A Critique and an Agenda," *The Public Historian* 15 (1993): 30. On the method and approach of this new social history, see Alice Kessler-Harris, "Social History," in *The New American History,* ed. Eric Foner, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997).

30. Steven M. Gillon, "The Future of Political History," *Journal of Policy History* 9 (1997): 243.

31. Gillon, "Future," 243, citing Peter Novick, *The Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 469–521.

32. William E. Leuchtenburg, "The Pertinence of Political History: Reflections on the Significance of the State in America," *Journal of American History* 73 (1986): 589.

33. Gillon, "Future," 247. Sociological studies of social movements similarly focused on grass roots movement emergence and not impact. Edwin Amenta and Michael P. Young, "Making an Impact: The Conceptual and Methodological Implications of the Collective Benefits Criterion" in *How Social Movements Matter,* eds. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam, and Charles Tilly (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

34. Victoria C. Hattam, *Labor Visions and State Power: The Origins of Business Unionism in the United States* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

35. Historians are increasingly careful to trace the links between grass roots protest and federal policy. See, for example, Brian Balogh, ed., *Integrating the Sixties* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), and Thomas J. Sugrue's "Affirmative Action from Below: Civil Rights, Labor, and Racial Politics in the Urban North, 1945–1969," *Journal of American History,* forthcoming. For a strong statement of the policy impact of grass roots social movements, see Michael McCann, *Rights At Work: Pay Equity Reform and the Politics of Legal Mobilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

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passing the law. My claim is mistaken, or at least oversimplified or overstated. In fact, Congress is fragmented, there is little unity, and statutes are revised multiple times to win support. As a result, statutes and the very concept of "legislative intent" are often incoherent.[36] However, I stand by a claim that at least the vast majority of members of Congress were thinking about blacks, that blacks were by far the greatest concern of Congress in passing the law, and that resistance to equality for blacks was the basis of most of the resistance to the law in general. Moreover, and this is the main point, the law would not have been passed without the history of oppression and efforts of African Americans. Other minority groups (unless we consider Jews and Catholics to be minorities) contributed little to its passage. When I discussed nonblack groups not "earning" a place in the minority rights revolutions, I was not making a moral point (and note that this word is only used once in the entire book, and even then in quotation marks). It was an empirical point: mass mobilization was not the decisive factor that explains nonblack minorities' inclusion in federal laws and regulations.

Hattam's evidence for concern for other groups being a part of this struggle is very weak. First, sounding rather like a strict constructionist in the tradition of Justices William Rehnquist or Antonin Scalia, Hattam refers to the plain words of the Civil Rights Act to support her argument. Because the law mentions national origin and religious discrimination, members of Congress *must* have been seriously intending for the law to deal with all kinds of discrimination, and Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians must have been central actors in the story. However, Hattam ignores Table 4.1 on page 93, showing the results of Paul Burstein's research on witnesses appearing before congressional hearings on employment discrimination between 1940 and 1972. Sixty-nine witnesses represented black civil rights groups, whereas only two represented "other racial" groups. Nine represented nationality groups.[37] Hattam might say that number is significant, but coupled with the other evidence I present of lack of participation, it appears very minor to me. Even assuming the nonblack minorities appeared before 1964, if we take away those eleven nonblack minority witnesses, the law would still pass. Take away the nearly 70 representatives of the black groups, and it is harder to imagine success.

This point highlights a basic difference in interpretation that readers and future scholars will have to decide for themselves: how many constitute a significant number? I viewed political activity of nonblack minorities relatively, always in comparison with blacks, and called it as I saw it. When less than 1 percent of the EEOC's first 3,773 complaints for investigation were on national origin grounds, I say that is an insignificant number (*MRR*, 119). But one-third of the first complaints were from women – and I say that is a lot, and these complaints demanded attention from reluctant civil rights administrators (*MRR*, 111). Hattam points out that 6 percent of complaints to the WWII-era Fair Employment Practices Commission were based on national origin, apparently believing that any number greater than zero is somehow significant. Given that 80 percent of the complaints were based on race, and that Latino-rights advocate Senator Dennis Chavez (D-NM) struggled to organize Latinos on the issue and complained of a lack of interest in his community (*MRR*, 91), I would judge these complaints as minor in comparison. Of course, except for women, the nonblack minorities were considerably fewer in number than African Americans and more regionally concentrated – both factors that contributed to their invisibility to Washington elites.

Hattam's other evidence is similarly unimpressive. She presents Lyndon Johnson's memory of teaching poor Mexican American children and what she describes as his invocation of "discrimination against Mexican Americans when trying to capture the ravages of American racism" in his Howard University speech as evidence of some significant federal concern for nonblack minorities. This is unconvincing for several reasons. First, both incidents came *after* 1964, and do not challenge my interpretation that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was widely understood to be about African Americans, and that only after that was there a great expansion of policies originally enacted for African Americans. Of course, I do not have difficulty with a claim that the federal government was showing concern for Latinos in 1965 – most of the book is precisely about the expansion of rights policies to nonblack minorities between 1965 and 1975. As such, this material is not counterevidence that I ignore, it *is* the story. I confess I am confused that the opening anecdote of my book (Barry Goldwater

36. R. Shep Melnick, *Between the Lines: Interpreting Welfare Rights* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1994), 11; William N. Eskridge, Jr., *Dynamic Statutory Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 14–20. Courts nevertheless seek to identify legislative intent, and the Supreme Court's thorough analysis in *Steelworkers v. Weber* (443 U.S. 193 [1979]) concluded that Congress's "primary concern" was "the plight of the Negro in our economy" (at 202). The quotations from members of Congress used in the opinion to indicate Congress's intentions identify only "Negroes" and mention no other groups (though the term "minority") was sometimes used.

37. The table is from Paul Burstein, *Discrimination, Jobs and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 106. In discussing who lobbied government officials, as reported in the *New York Times,* Burstein adds that "Almost all of the 46 EEO delegations and 193 general delegations reported between 1940 and 1972 were acting on behalf of the rights of blacks" (Burstein, *Discrimination, Jobs and Politics,* 105). Burstein rather bizarrely also mentions the "power" of the Hispanic group in getting national origin discrimination into the law, but notes (as do I in *MRR,* 91, 94) at the same time that this was primarily the result not of Latino rights groups, but the individual influence of Senator Dennis Chavez of New Mexico (Burstein, *Discrimination, Jobs and Politics,* 22).

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telling Nixon in 1969 how to win the Mexican American vote) is to Hattam an "eruption of a more complex racial politics at play" that I ignore. I do not deny that post-1964 racial politics are complex. One might say that the minority rights revolution *is* the post-1964, sudden development of a new racial politics.

Second, it is notable that Hattam chooses statements about only Mexican Americans, and not other Latinos, Asian Americans, or American Indians. The history of oppression of Puerto Ricans, Asian Americans, and American Indians was in 1964 – rightly or wrongly – far off the radar in Washington.[38] In other words, even if Hattam is correct about Mexican Americans, she still has the daunting task of finding evidence of great federal concern with the oppression of Asian Americans in 1964 or even today.[39]

Third, even if we ignore the date of the Johnson references, the significance of this evidence is taken out of context and then greatly exaggerated. LBJ's message to Congress about voting rights, for example, is couched entirely as a problem of African Americans. He begins the message by saying that the issue of "equal rights for American Negroes" is among those few that "lay bare the secret heart of America."[40] In describing the facts of the situation, he states, "The harsh fact is in many places in this country men and women are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes."[41] In describing social movement protest, he says "The real hero of this struggle is the American Negro."[42] Even more striking is that when he talks of other victims in the system of racial oppression, he mentions only that poor *whites* are also harmed.[43] He ends the speech by being inclusive, yet he does not mention any of the nonblack minorities: "We are also going to give all our people, black and white, the help that they need to walk through those gates (to opportunity)."[44]

The speech at (historically black) Howard University was based on the Labor Department report, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" (otherwise known as "the Moynihan Report," after its author, Daniel Patrick Moynihan) which was about, not surprisingly, blacks. In the Howard speech, Johnson mentions Mexican Americans exactly once, in only one sentence: "I have seen this uncomprehending pain in the eyes of the little Mexican-American schoolchildren that I taught many years ago."[45] I think it is incorrect to consider this sort of reference as an expression of concern for Mexican American problems. It is more likely an attempt to convince the audience (of African Americans) he understands *their* problems.

The literature that Hattam cites to buttress her points on the activity of nonblack mobilization is similarly unconvincing. Komozi Woodard's book does describe some black groups working with Puerto Rican groups; however, these efforts are all local (we cannot assume that any local mobilization automatically influences federal elites), and all occur after 1964 and after Latinos were already named as minorities in the EEOC's 1965 minority counting form.[46] Pei-te Lien's work, cited by Hattam to show Asian American protest activity, similarly offers no links between protest or even lobbying and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In fact, Lien's book gives far less attention to the role of Asians and the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965 than does my own book.[47]

Most problematic for Hattam's thesis that there was significant nonblack minority grass roots activity in 1965, that it was on the minds of federal officials, and that minority status was not "extended" to them is that nonblack minority advocates *themselves* used the narrative of extension in the years after the Civil Rights Act. This was perhaps most true of Latinos, who complained frequently (to the same Johnson administration that Hattam says was greatly concerned about Mexican Americans) that they were being ignored and demanded recognition in a White House conference similar to those staged for African Americans (*MRR*, 197–99). As one leader of the League of United Latin American Citizens complained to Johnson, Mexican Americans were America's "invisible minority" (*MRR*, 123). Other groups claimed to be

38. One problem for all of these groups, including Mexican Americans, was their regional concentrations in the south and west, far from Washington. Puerto Ricans had the advantage of being concentrated in a major media and political center, and received some high-profile attention in Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan's classic, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*, 2d ed. (1963; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1970), but there was no great mass mobilization of this group. Even with Mexican Americans, their primary issues were local and not federal government issues (a fact noted by Johnson officials after meeting with Mexican American leaders; *MRR*, 198). Note also that the most well-known leader of Mexican Americans, Cesar Chavez, worked on an issue, farm workers, not even covered by the Civil Rights Act and was not (according to White House officials themselves) well-known outside of the farm issue (*MRR*, 196, 415).

39. Frank Wu, *Yellow: Race in American Beyond Black and White* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Gordon H. Chang, ed., *Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

40. "Special Message to the Congress: The American Promise." 15 Mar. 1965, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, 1965, Book 1 – January 1 to May 31, 1965* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1966), 281.

41. Ibid., 282.

42. Ibid., 285.

43. Ibid., 284.

44. Ibid., 286.

45. "To Fulfill These Rights," Commencement Address at Howard University, 4 June 1965, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, 1965, Book 2* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1966), 638.

46. Komozi Woodard, *A Nation within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 97–100, 138–40, 162, 237.

47. Pei-te Lien, *The Making of Asian America through Political Participation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 53. See *MRR*, variously, at 37–57.

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America's invisible minorities. The language of being invisible, ignored, forgotten, or otherwise treated as insignificant is common during the period, as I document throughout the book. If Hattam is right, this language is nonsensical.

The narrative of extension is everywhere in the book because it is everywhere in the period under study. The story of women's inclusion is famously one of (as the Labor Department's Esther Peterson called it) "riding the coattails" of black civil rights (*MRR,* 97). Although other minority leaders were less willing to admit it, the same dynamic worked for other groups. This is perhaps most evident in the story of minority capitalism affirmative action, detailed in Chapter 5, which began as an effort to quell massive, nationwide black rioting, but which almost immediately included nonrioting Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians.[48] A few years after Nixon took office, Latinos were the major focus of a program originally designed to quell African American rioting and insurrections occurring all across America.

Again, there is nothing normatively wrong with this. Policies frequently expand. *MRR* is about how and why this expansion occurred so rapidly, in a bipartisan fashion, for some groups and not others.

Hattam's description of her alternative approach is, at other points, strikingly similar to my own. She states that she wants to know why some forms of discrimination, such as religious discrimination, were not protected by the EEOC or the Labor Department. While prohibitions against religious discrimination were in fact enforced by the EEOC, she is right that the EEOC and the Labor Department did not include religious minorities in affirmative action. However, in the book, I provide a detailed account of the struggle to include Jews and Catholics as protected minorities in affirmative action regulations (*MRR,* 102, 275–314). Another related point of commonality is Hattam's claim that "Rather than official minority status being construed out of whole cloth, federal bureaucrats codified prevailing social expectations as to who had suffered during the complex history of American racial domination." This is almost exactly the argument of the importance of the "black analogy" made throughout the book, and elaborated in Chapter 9, where I describe why the white ethnics came up short and state officials excluded them. Where we might differ is on the word "prevailing." I tried to avoid making claims about how widespread the black analogy was; white ethnic and gay/lesbian leaders obviously differed with policymakers on whether their groups were like blacks. I limit my argument to the policymakers who had the power and for whom I had gathered historical data.[49]

Finally, Hattam's alternative approach makes much of the census's treatment of Latinos as an ethnic and not racial group, and OMB's Statistical Directive 15, standardizing the collection of racial statistics. On the former point, Hattam claims that I am wrong to say that the state treated Latinos as a racial group. "It is accepted," she writes, "that Hispanics might be of any race, and yet nevertheless qualify for civil rights protections due to the long history of discrimination on the basis of Spanish origin and culture, namely their religion and language." Note her use of passive voice: it is accepted. By whom? The Census Bureau, yes, but not civil rights administrators. I actually make much of the "white" self-identification of about half of all Latinos in the census (*MRR,* 307) to highlight the point that for affirmative action purposes, "white," "black," and "Hispanic" were mutually exclusive categories (and continue as such today). Whatever the census says, the fact is that affirmative action regulations consider Hispanics a group apart from whites and blacks. I point out that the 1947 report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights fudges the issue, treating Mexican Americans as both a racial and ethnic group (*MRR,* 91–92); however, by the late 1960s, the civil rights bureaucracy had racialized Latinos. Therefore, when gutting a regulation that would have included white ethnics, Catholics, and Jews in affirmative action in employment, federal officials repeatedly distinguished these groups from the official minorities, including Latinos, by reference to the latter groups' identifiable, physical characteristics (*MRR,* 286–90). Of course, by this point, some Latinos were racializing *themselves,* making claims of a new struggle for "brown power" (*MRR,* 199–200). Whatever the Census Bureau's careful distinction between race and ethnicity in the case of Latinos, American civil rights laws mirror American folk categories that David Hollinger called the "ethno-racial pentagon" (black, brown, red, white, yellow).[50]

Because these categories are institutionalized in civil rights regulations that affect millions of businesses and individuals every day – whenever a person applies for a job, or is hired or fired, or applies for a government loan or contract, or applies to a school – I treated them as more significant than the census category. And because Directive 15 confirmed institutional practice of racial categorization that had existed for twelve years (earlier, actually, in poorly enforced civil rights programs), I do not believe the 1977 regulation carries the significance so many scholars attribute to it. Simply put, it said nothing new.

48. There was a Latino riot in August 1970, but this came after Latinos were included in various forms of affirmative action and had won bilingual education and language rights (*MRR,* 424).

49. For a strongly worded demand that historians identify precisely who is doing the race perceiving and constructing, see Eric Arnesen, "Whiteness and the Historians' Imagination," *International Labor and Working Class History* 60 (2001): 3–32, esp. 19–20.

50. David Hollinger, *Post-Ethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (1995; New York: Basic Books, 2001), chap. 2.

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THE POLITICS OF STUDYING RACIAL POLITICS

The most alarming part of Hattam's critique for me was the charge that my account is "pernicious" and "perpetuates a politics of racial antagonism and division." Although I was surprised by her strong assumption that an academic book could have serious influence on national politics, the substance of her political critique was not surprising. As explained in the preface, I worried that the book would be seen as anti-Latino because the chapters dealing with Latinos did not mask my amazement at ease of policy development for this group. It is also true that, despite the distinction made between official and unofficial minorities throughout the historical chapter, I argue in the conclusion the case for "black exceptionalism," the position that the black experience in America is unique. Most indicators of group status and acceptance show that nonblack Americans avoid blacks as neighbors, marriage partners, and employees, and maintain negative stereotypes about them (*MRR*, 344–45). Because of the unique history of discrimination against blacks and the demonstrably greater severity of it today (and *not* because of their greater mobilization), I do believe that African Americans have an especially urgent claim to our faltering federal ameliorative efforts. As Hattam would surely agree, we can thus see black exceptionalism while still accepting the importance of other racial, ethnic, gender, class, and sexual orientation experiences in America.

But Hattam also should be clear that her approach, which emphasizes the experiences of blacks along with Asian Americans, Latinos, and American Indians, would not discourage racial division. It would simply maintain it where it is now: between lower-class whites, especially the white ethnic and Catholic voters, and the official minorities. As *MRR* amply documents, and earlier scholars and political consultants have argued, targeting policy at blacks is associated with racial tension in America, and the working class whites' association of the Democrats with racial minorities (especially blacks) has been a significant factor contributing to their defection to the Republican Party.[51] The real challenge of the progressive agenda, as civil rights leaders and scholars have long pointed out, is to unite the white working class with minorities.

Finally, the political message of the book, while muted, is not the one that Hattam inferred. As I argued in the preface, neither the Left nor the Right should become attached to any particular policy. An open mind and a lack of attachment seem the most rational responses when we consider the messy processes of policymaking. The old comparison of legislating to sausage-making is apt. Yet it is not just the messiness that should discourage over-attachment to specific policies; even when the process is orderly, as in the institutional process of path dependence or policy feedback, we see that the policies that emerge are not the most moral, the best, or the most efficient. They are the policies that emerge because of the development of past policies and institutions. So why should we, especially the progressive Left, defend present policies against all challengers, especially when we ourselves see the policies as deficient? Minority rights discourse since the 1970s has too often become undemocratic, unprogressive, and unintellectual. The Left too often demands orthodoxy and labels challengers to be morally deficient – challengers are said to be racist, sexist, xenophobic, and the like.

By extension, progressives and minorities should avoid over-attachment to one party.[52] Between 1965 and 1975, we see that party competition for minority group support can in certain circumstances lead to a flourishing of new policies. As long as elites considered minority votes to be winnable and capable of being integrated into a winning coalition, they pursued them. Could it happen again? Might Republicans again pursue minority votes with the vigor and creativity they exhibited in the 1960s and early 1970s, and therefore encourage further innovation by Democrats? Perhaps not, especially for African Americans, but it is more likely to happen if minority leaders keep an open mind and listen to alternatives. To that end, I appreciate Victoria Hattam's spirited and engaged critique of my book and her attention to this important period in American political history. Despite our different starting points and different interpretations, we share a desire for what she calls "a wider range of political options" for disadvantaged groups in America.

51. On party or coalition politics and race, see Thomas Byrne Edsall and Mary D. Esdall, *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1992); Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances;* Paul Sniderman and Thomas Piazza, *The Scar of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

52. Paul Frymer has powerfully shown how the capture of blacks by the Democratic Party has led to their neglect by both the Republicans and Democrats (Frymer, *Uneasy Alliances*).

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