

The University of Akron

IdeaExchange@UAkron

Representing Interests and Interest Group Representation

1994

Representing Interests and Interest Group Representation

William Crotty

Mildred A. Schwartz

John C. Green

Follow this and additional works at: https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/representing_interests



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), and the [Education Commons](#)

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you [through this survey](#). Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by IdeaExchange@UAkron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Representing Interests and Interest Group Representation by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@UAkron. For more information, please contact mjon@uakron.edu, uapress@uakron.edu.

Representing Interests and Interest Group Representation

Edited by
William Crotty
Mildred A. Schwartz
John C. Green

Prepared by
The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics
The University of Akron

This material is copyrighted (1994) and posted by permission of University Press of America, Inc.

UNIVERSITY
PRESS OF
AMERICA



THE RAY C. BLISS
INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED POLITICS
The University of Akron

Copyright © 1994 by
The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics

University Press of America® Inc.

4720 Boston Way
Lanham, Maryland 20706

3 Henrietta Street
London WC2E 8LU England

All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
British Cataloging in Publication Information Available

Co-published by arrangement with
The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Representing interests and interest group representation / edited by
William Crotty, Mildred A. Schwartz, John C. Green.

p. cm.

"Copublished by arrangement with the Ray C. Bliss Institute of
Applied Politics"—T.p. verso.

Includes bibliographical references.

I. Pressure groups—United States. I. Crotty, William J.

II. Schwartz, Mildred A. III. Green, John Clifford.

IV. Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics.

JD1118.R46 1994 324'.4'0973—dc20 94-2298 CIP

ISBN 0-8191-9458-1 (cloth : alk. paper)

ISBN 0-8191-9459-X (pbk. : alk. paper)



The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of
American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence
of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.



Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
<i>About the Contributors</i>	xi

PART ONE **Scholarly Perspectives**

1 Interest Representation and Interest Groups: Promise and Potentialities, <i>William Crotty</i>	1
2 Interest Structures and Policy Domains: A Focus for Research, <i>Robert H. Salisbury</i>	12
3 An Agenda for Research on Interest Groups, <i>Jeffrey M. Berry</i>	21
4 Research Gaps in the Study of Interest Groups Representation, <i>Allan J. Cigler</i>	29
5 Interest Group Research: Questions and Approaches, <i>John Tierney</i>	37
6 Interviewing Interest Group Personnel: The Little Village in the World, <i>Andrew S. McFarland</i>	46

7	Reflections on the Study of the Interest Groups in the States, <i>Virginia Gray and David Lowery</i>	58
8	Voluntary Organizations in Politics: Who Get Involved? <i>Kay Lehman Schlozman</i>	68

PART TWO
Applied Perspectives

9	Comments by Practitioners	89
---	---------------------------	----

Tables

Tables

7.1	Comparison of Ranking of Overall Interest Group Strength	61
7.2	Comparison of Ranking of Individual Interest Group Strength	62
8.1	Organizational Affiliation by Education and Race/Ethnicity	83
8.2	Organizational Affiliation by Education and Gender	83
8.3	Perception of Organizational Involvement in Politics by Education	84

Figures

7.1	Comparison of the Elements of State Interest Group Systems--1980 & 1990	64
7.2	Average Number of Interest Groups in 1980 and 1990 for Several Sample Sets	64
8.1	Involvement in Various Kinds of Organizations	74
8.2	Organizational Involvement of Demographic Groups	77
8.3	Belong to an Organization Related to Benefit Program	78

Preface

The Political Organization and Parties Section of the American Political Science Association sponsored the second in a series of workshops on Wednesday, September 2, 1992. This workshop, entitled "Representing Interests and Interest Representation," included a panel of scholars presenting brief papers on researching interest groups and a panel of Chicago-area interest group leaders responding from their personal experience. The results of these panels are included in this publication, the goal of which is to make the results of the workshop available to students of interest groups.

The second POP workshop resulted from a great deal of work on the part of many people. Special recognition goes to Bill Crotty and Mildred Schwartz, who organized the scholarly and practitioner panels, respectively, and helped edit the resulting materials. The leadership of POP, particularly the Chair, Gerry Pomper, and the Program Chair, Ruth Jones, were instrumental in organizing the workshop as well. We are grateful to the participating scholars and practitioners who graciously consented to have their remarks reprinted here. Special thanks goes to James Guth for reading and commenting on the entire manuscript, Kimberly Haverkamp and Shannon Little of the Bliss Institute for their careful work on the manuscript, and to Maureen Munchaster and the University Press of America, with whom this volume is co-published.

The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics is a bipartisan research and teaching institute at The University of Akron, dedicated to understanding the "nuts and bolts" of practical politics with a particular emphasis on political parties and related organizations. Thus we are pleased to make available the results of the second POP workshop. This volume parallels one from the first POP workshop, *Machine Politics, Sound Bites and Nostalgia: On Studying Political Parties*, which was co-published in 1993.

John C. Green, Director
Bliss Institute

About the Contributors

Jeffrey M. Berry, is Professor of Political Science at Tufts University. He is the co-author of *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (1993) which was published by the Brookings Institution, and the author of *Lobbying for the People* (1977), *Feeding Hungry People* (1984), and *The Interest Group Society* (1988).

Allan J. Cigler, is the Chancellor's Club Teaching Professor of Political Science at the University of Kansas. His most recent interest group publications include *U.S. Agriculture Groups* (1990) and the third edition of *Interest Group Politics* (1991).

William Crotty, is a Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University. He is author of a number of books and articles on political parties and elections, including *The Party Game Party Reform and Decision for the Democrats*, and editor of *Political Science: Looking to the Future* and *America's Choice: The Election of 1992*.

Virginia Gray, is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Minnesota. Her research on state interest groups has appeared in *American Political Science Review*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *Journal of Politics*, *State and Local Government Review*, and *Journal of Public Policy*.

David Lowery, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has co-authored *Understanding U.S. Government Growth: An Empirical Analysis of the Post-War Era* (1987) and *The Politics of Dissatisfaction: Citizens, Services, and Urban Institutions* (1992).

Andrew S. McFarland, is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the author of three books about interest groups: *Cooperative Pluralism: The National Coal Policy Experiment* (1993), *Common Cause* (1984), and *Public Interest Lobbies: Decision Making on Energy* (1976).

Robert H. Salisbury, is a Professor of Political Science at Washington University. He is the author of *Interests and Institutions* (1992), co-author of *The Hollow Core* (with Heinz, Lauman, and Nelson), and numerous seminal articles on interest groups.

Kay Lehman Schlozman, is a Professor of Political Science at Boston College. She has co-authored *Injury to Insult: Unemployment, Class, and Political Response* and *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. Currently, she is working on a study of voluntary participation in American political and social life.

Mildred A. Schwartz, is a Professor of Sociology and of Political Science at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Recent publications include *A Sociological Perspective on Politics* (1990) and *The Party Network: The Robust Organization of Illinois Republicans* (1990).

John Tierney, is Associate Professor of Political Science at Boston College. He is the co-author of *Organized Interests and American Democracy* and author of two other books and many articles on varied aspects of American politics and public policy.

PART ONE

Scholarly Perspectives

Interest Representation and Interest Groups: Promise and Potentialities

William Crotty

The study of interest representation is a relatively "old" subject of political inquiry. Over the course of time, it has produced some outstanding contributions, from Arthur F. Bentley's *The Process of Government* (1908), little-read but much-acknowledged, through David B. Truman and his monumental *The Governmental Process* in the early 1950s, to those of Robert H. Salisbury (1969, 1984), Jack L. Walker (1983), and Mancur Olson, Jr. (1965) in the present period, including those represented (in addition to Salisbury) in this volume.

The academic work on interest groups and interest representation has proven influential in defining the study of politics. Interest groups and other "group concepts" of politics dominated explanations of American government and policy-making in the 1950s and early 1960s and, as filtered through the concept of pluralism, have provided what is arguably the most-lasting and perhaps the most-persuasive theorizing on political decision-making in the United States. Explanations of the dynamics of political action and the distribution of policy rewards through group competition have had a lasting appeal to many academicians. Certainly generations of students in political science courses have been presented this view of the political world. A review of textbooks reveals the influence of this perspective on the most comprehensive interpretations of American government and how it operates. The approach is less attractive in other democratic nations (possibly one reason for the lack of extensive cross-national studies of interest group influence) and, in fact, the definition of what constitutes "pluralism" may well be significantly different within other national cultures. Still, group conceptions of politics have maintained a surprisingly strong appeal for American political scientists despite extensive challenges.

As Jeffrey M. Berry (Chapter 3) says (and the other authors in this volume reemphasize to varying degrees), "interest group representation lies at the heart of democracy in America." This is true. Yet despite the intellectual force of its contributions and the influence of its theorizing on the

discipline, the study of interest groups has had an uneven development and is facing major problems (Cigler 1991; Berry 1988). Its evolution has been fitful, alternating between periods of intense interest and, more commonly, prolonged neglect. The number of practitioners in the field is relatively small today. Berry estimates that depending on the criteria used, roughly 6 percent of recent dissertations indicate "at least a short-term commitment to interest group scholarship" (or 10 percent if research on social movements is included).

All told, interest group research is neither incrementally cumulative nor necessarily related in subject matter or focus. Rather, it reflects strategies dictated by scholars' personal interests or accessibility of data. Of course, this is a charge that could be leveled at many areas of political science. The problem is that in a small but crucial subfield of a broader discipline with relatively few active researchers, these problems become both obvious and disturbing. Indeed, omissions in the study of interest representation are both substantial and, given their potential impact on the discipline, puzzling.

To document a few: research has focused predominantly on domestic policy-making (curious given the emphasis on foreign policy and the impact of the Cold War in establishing national priorities); comparative and cross-national research projects are rare; large-scale, empirically-based explorations of interest groups have been limited in number; there are fewer historical works and longitudinal quantitative studies; and field work has often ignored theoretical concerns, and what has been done has been difficult to integrate into broader conceptual formats.

On another level, interest group research has been faulted for inattention to internal group demands, goal-setting, decision-making and membership influence, concerns that have propelled a good deal of research on political parties. And given the focus on organized groups, the questions of what group members want and the proportion of the population that is represented through group channels have received little systematic empirical analysis, despite being the center of often acrimonious debate. Indeed, to what extent does a pluralistic group culture best represent the interests of its citizenry? Such questions are basic to an understanding of interest representation.

Studies have often been narrowly focused, detailing one group and its operations at one point in time, or the adoption of one piece of legislation, or, more inclusive yet, outcomes in a specialized policy-making area. This may be another way of saying that much of the field research has relied extensively on the case study approach. Although the results have often made impressive additions to our knowledge, (see as examples: Browne 1988; Hansen 1991, 1985; McConnell 1966; Cigler 1986; Cigler and Hansen 1983; Bosso 1987; and Berry 1984 on just one of the best explored areas, food and agriculture policy), broadly comparative, inclusively designed studies have been less common (but examples include Walker 1991; Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Salisbury, Heinz, Laumann and Nelson 1987; Heinz et al., 1990;

Salisbury et al. 1993; Berry, Portney and Thomson 1993; and on state-level interest group operations, Rosenthal 1992; Gray and Lowery 1992, 1993, 1988; Lowery and Gray 1993, and the citations in their paper in this volume), and major synthesizing efforts have been rare (but see Cigler 1991 and the citations therein). In methodological terms, the case study has been a useful and, to a degree, distinguishing feature of much interest group research. The personalized elite interviewing that serves as a basis for much of this work is demanding, an art in itself and one that deserves extended attention. Andrew McFarland (Chapter 6) assesses some of the problems in this approach and captures the essence of its appeal and value, as does John Tierney's (Chapter 5) advocacy of, to borrow Richard F. Fenno's (1978, 1990) characterization, "soaking and poking."

The study of interest representation overlaps, and borrows from, a number of other subfields in political science as well as from other disciplines: economics, social psychology, organizational behavior, sociology, and, in approach, anthropology. Again, this in itself is not unusual (and, in fact, is welcome). What is less ordinary is the unusually fluid nature of the research enterprise; the expansiveness (and changing structure) of the "interests" that are or could be pursued (Cigler and Loomis 1983); the absence of defining criteria or agreed upon limits as to what constitutes the subfield and what defines its practitioners (Cigler 1991; Salisbury 1975; Berry 1988); and what the subfield shares and what demarcates it from other, related avenues of inquiry. In short, the field has its distinctive problems as well as its strengths and familiar methods of intellectual pursuit.

How then to bring all of this together in one volume?

One starting point is to settle on a definition of what constitutes interest representation and interest group research. We can begin with Robert H. Salisbury, one of the most thoughtful and influential of scholars shaping the field (Salisbury 1969, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1990; Salisbury et al. 1987, 1993; Heinz et al. 1990; Salisbury and Johnson 1989), and his definition in this volume. What Salisbury (Chapter 2) refers to as his "current working definition" of "interest" is as follows:

. . . an interest arises from the conjunction between some private value-held by a political actor - public officials, or groups thereof as well as private sector operatives - and some authoritative action or proposed action by government. Neither private value nor governmental action (actual or potential) can by itself generate the interest. Likelihoods and propensities may abound, but unless the conjunction occurs, there is no interest . . . interests are constantly being defined, redefined and even discovered as when some new action proposal appears on the political scene . . . among the core tasks lobbyists [and others] must perform is monitoring ongoing processes of policy development so as to recognize newly emergent interests.

In turn, ". . . a focus on interest representation entails three component parts: a *conception of interests* expressed . . . in substantially specific terms

. . . ; a conception of the *process of interest representation* . . . ; and a theoretically grounded assessment of the *impact on public decisions* of the actions involved in the interest representation process" (italics in original).

Accepting such a definitional criteria as formulations of the core focus of the field, we can move on to ask two broad questions which each chapter addresses in one form or another. In studying interest representation, *What* questions should be asked? And, then *How* should they be asked?

Each of the authors considered these questions within different contexts. Robert Salisbury, in addition to providing a coherence to the undertaking and a focus for research, develops an overview of inquiry in the field and some of the problem areas to be encountered. He advocates the investigation of: first, the spatial distribution of economic activity; second, the inter-relationship of values and interests to the ethnocultural patterns of settlement and migration in the United States; and third, the historic development of cultural institutions that shape values. He also encourages the examination of the government promotion of interests, directly and indirectly, at various levels, and the relationship between groups and officials. There is a broad research agenda here. Salisbury concludes:

. . . Our scope must include every active unit, from the isolated individual to the most complex coalition of organizations several steps removed from individual members, that engages in interest-based activity relative to the process of making public policy. I recognize that this constitutes a supremely imperial conception of our field. So be it. What should we leave out? What organizations and/or active individuals fail to qualify? I see no need to restrict our jurisdiction in advance and much reason to be ready to incorporate more rather than less organizational variety . . . Our research has suffered more from omissions rather than from too expansive a notion of what to include.

Allan J. Cigler (Chapter 4) has written extensively on interest groups, including an earlier assessment of the research in the subfield (1991), an examination that Cigler says resulted in "a genuine ambivalence about the state of our knowledge." He concluded that researchers "had only scratched the surface of the vast, dynamic and complex world of organized political influence."

An imbalance of efforts marks the field, with some topics and areas heavily researched and others neglected. Focusing on research needs, Cigler would like to see more attention given to economic and business organizations, social movements, and specialized agencies, such as public law groups, hospitals, and think tanks. These are all largely ignored by political scientists: defense and foreign policy; comparative assessments of group resources, influence, and intra-organizational decision-making; group resource acquisition and patron relationships; group maintenance dynamics; and interest group-political party interrelationships. This last area of interest, once prominent, has suffered as the interest of scholars has been re-directed

to other topics and institutional relationships, and as the role of political parties has undergone significant change (see Ferguson and Rogers 1986). In summary, Cigler states: "the research agenda for those who study organized interests has always been diverse and is likely to remain so."

John Tierney (Chapter 5) is the co-author (with Kay Lehman Schlozman) of one of the very few macro-level empirical analyses of national-level lobbying (*Organized Interests and American Democracy* 1986), a comprehensive and thoughtful study of organizational influence in Washington. He has also done research on interest group politics and policy-making in public lands, postal affairs, and health care (1987). Tierney argues that scholars "produce good research and writing when they explore questions they personally find engaging and use methods they find productive." Tierney would like to see more investigations of interest articulation and influence; intra-organizational decisions as to policy objectives, membership influence and patterns of deliberations; and the factors that determine the choice of strategies and tactics in the pursuit of goals. All these are familiar foci of research in other areas of political science, but such avenues of exploration have been less developed in relation to interest groups.

In addition, the following could benefit from an increase in research attention: bureaucratic and executive branch lobbying and the symbiotic relationship between interest groups and public agencies; a less selective, more comprehensive documentation of policy influences in all major areas of government; the effects of political, social and institutional changes in policy directions; and what would undoubtedly prove controversial, the influence of foreign governments (working through Washington lobbyists and domestic membership groups) on policy towards individual nations (Japan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Kuwait and Mexico, to name a few).

In terms of research strategies, while acknowledging the value of a variety of approaches, Tierney advocates unstructured interview situations and informal, on-site immersion in the culture and operations of the target group. He, like Salisbury and others, is an advocate (to use Salisbury's term) of "complexification" rather than simplification of research strategies. And in departure from the others in the volume, Tierney raises the issue of normative judgment, a concern that can make many trained scholars in a "value free" empiricism ethos uncomfortable. Tierney flatly states the desirability of "more normative analyses of organized interest politics--more effort to sort through what is healthy and what is not about current interest group politics in this country." The "spirited normative debates" Tierney envisions would be an entirely new departure and, one that in itself, might stimulate a renewed interest in the study of interest groups.

Andrew S. McFarland (Chapter 6) is the author, among other works, of *Common Cause*, a compelling study of perhaps the best-known and most publicly active public interest lobbying group (see also Berry 1977). McFarland's experience in doing this study and the research techniques he

used is instructive. The problems encountered and the types of concerns that arise both pre- and post-publication are not readily anticipated by those who have yet to engage in such efforts.

McFarland is a proponent of the "interviewer as anthropologist," the social scientist who concentrates on the "little villages" that make up the social system of the group under study. Absorbing the atmosphere ("hanging around") and identifying the customs, by-ways, and influence channels is a basic part of the research strategy. The scholar acts as interviewer, observer, evaluator, and synthesist of what he or she observes and the data thus collected. The personal interview is key ("to me interviewing is a craft") to the approach, "and the most important *modus operandi* of such interviewing is to get the 'inhabitants' of the little villages to talk freely. After several dozen such interviews the 'anthropologist' should be able to chart the customs and the social organization of the group being studied." Curiously, given the importance of the approach, relatively little has been written on elite interviewing or "anthropological" field work in political science. McFarland makes a singular contribution in this regard (see also Dexter 1970).

McFarland reviews the problems associated with a field work strategy: the often severe difficulties inherent in scheduling appointments and gaining access to respondents; the most useful manner in which to conduct such interviews and, in particular, the decision to record the meetings or to take notes during or immediately after the session; the availability of supplemental data and information; the strategic concerns in developing the substantive issues to be addressed both in the individual interviews and within the broader context of the organizational system; and the potential "biases" or misperceptions of the researcher in interpreting and publicizing the results. The audience for the study are professional colleagues who judge a research effort significantly in relation to its objectivity. The researcher consequently has to distance himself or herself emotionally from the organization and often from the friendships built during the field investigations. In his study of Common Cause, for example, McFarland found that while he personally favored the group's goals, the leadership did not like the manner in which he portrayed them or their objectives in his book, and effectively froze him out of further contact. McFarland makes the point that such methods in political science have often given way to a dominant emphasis on quantitative, empirical and survey-based data, statistical or mathematical analysis, and broader-level generalizing and hypothesis testing. As a consequence, there may be potential costs in terms of professional recognition, acceptance, and even promotion for those who pursue such approaches.

Much has been done in the study of interest representation of great value. In assessing what needs to be done or what might profit from greater attention, there can be a tendency to overlook what has been accomplished. For example, much of the theorizing, while limited in volume, has been path-breaking: there are broad mappings now available of interest group objectives

and activity; interest group membership incentives and motivations are well understood; the expansion and contraction of the interest group universe and its changing definition of goals have been charted; selected areas of interest group influence and policy-making processes have been clearly developed (agriculture and health care are good examples); and the role of interest groups, and especially PACs, in funding candidates and campaigns has been extensively documented (thanks to the Federal Election Commission and the accessibility of its data).

Still, there are major areas in need of work, such as state-level research on interest representation, a subject that Virginia Gray and David Lowery address (Chapter 7). Of greatest concern is the paucity of research efforts. As Gray and Lowery point out, it was "not until the 1990s . . . [that] systematic empirical comparisons of state interest groups and lobbying [began] to appear." This strikes an observer as extraordinary. It does, however, support Gray and Lowery's contention that "great potential exists for exciting empirical work at the state level."

Gray and Lowery explore the directions that state-oriented research might take and relate these to their own work. They proceed from a belief that the state efforts should evolve from the same theoretical concerns that guide research at the national level and should be held to the same standards of scholarly acceptability. To date, most state-level interest group research has been guided by macro-level theorizing. More specifically, explanations of interest group diversification and influence have been grounded in explanations emphasizing the economic complexity and social heterogeneity of the states. These are, in essence, the "interest group theories of politics." Significantly under-utilized in the research have been the micro-level "theories of interest groups," their operations, impact, policy objectives, and resource mobilization.

Gray and Lowery adapt the economic and social complexity approach to their own ends by subdividing it into three independently measurable components: economic diversity, wealth, and economic size. These are then both inter-related with two other prominent typologies of interest group influence in the states and applied in their own research to the comparative analysis of interest group activity, both cross-sectionally by state and over time. The data set includes interest group registrations by state for 1975, 1980, and 1985, and it comprises one of three on-going data collections that should provide the basis for more systematic and comparative analyses at the state level in the future. In their work, the authors have chosen not to apply the more pro-active statist theories of scholars, such as Theda Skocpol, although these can offer one perspective for possible research significantly different from those traditionally employed (Evans, Rueschmeyer and Skocpol, 1985).

Gray and Lowery also make the point that, although micro-level theories of interest group behavior have been systematically developed and are

influential in research at the national level, they have had little impact at the state level (again, more than likely, a product of the limited number of studies). The intention is that their research will allow for the exploration and potential testing of hypotheses consistent with what is known about the micro-level explanations of interest groups. Such research approaches, of course, should be inviting to others as well. Case study, mid-level, and inclusive research strategies are assessed in relation to the completeness and validity of the picture of interest group behavior presented.

Gray and Lowery emphasize the need for historical studies, more in-depth case study analyses, better theorizing, and an articulation of the ties between interest group research and policy outcomes, themes each of the authors would concur with. They conclude by reemphasizing a major point of departure: "For empirical work on state interest groups to have impact, it needs to be tied into the major theories used in the rest of the discipline . . . the greatest payoff lies in bringing interest group theories developed elsewhere into state politics, rather than applying theories of state politics to interest groups."

The strategy pursued by Kay Lehman Schlozman (Chapter 8) and her co-researchers, Sidney Verba, Henry Brady and Norman Nie, in a sense turns the traditional studies on their head. Most of these focus on organized interests. While not denying the importance of such research (as indicated, Schlozman is the co-author with John Tierney of one of the most comprehensive studies in the field), Schlozman and her associates are more concerned with interest representation as it relates to the involvement of American citizens in group activity. Their "Citizen Participation Study" was designated as a two-stage mass survey intended to gauge the actual involvement of the general public in the variety of organizations, from fraternal and religious to economic and political, that structure American society.

The study initially screened 15,000 respondents, in itself an extraordinarily large first-stage sample, before settling on a subset of 2,500 people for more intensive interviewing. Basically, two sets of questions were put to respondents: What kind of organizations did they belong to? And what kind of involvement did they have with the organization? In the latter regard, respondents were probed to assess whether they could identify, or if they appreciated, the group's political relevance.

Americans are joiners. This much has been known. But the scope of organizations represented and the proportion of the public belonging to some type of group is, nonetheless, surprising. When pushed, 79 percent of the public indicated that they were involved with an organized group and 41 percent were found to belong to four or more. The range of organizational ties and the nature of the groups identified, of course, vary greatly. One example: while a little less than one-half of the population (45%) belong to some type of social service club, only 1 percent belong to an ideological (conservative or liberal) group. Yet it could be argued that this small fraction

of the population has a disproportionately important impact on the public policy.

The socio-economic biases implicit in organizational memberships have been well-documented. These differences are even more pronounced in groups that take political stands. As Schlozman notes, "The gaps between the well educated and the less schooled, the rich and the poor, Anglo-Whites and minorities, especially Latinos, and men and women are even more pronounced when it comes to organizations that are politically engaged." In addition to their over-representation in organizational affiliations, the economically and socially better-off make distinctive choices as to the groups with which they associate, tending to favor those that are politically active. Their organizational choices magnify the impact of their opinions on political decision-making. As shown in the areas of political relevance studied, "the economically disadvantaged are clearly at a disadvantage when it comes to organizational representation." This study is in its early stages of analysis. Clearly, it is a path-breaking effort that should provide us with a clear appreciation of who belongs to what in contemporary America, and the consequences these group affiliations have for public policy.

Taken as a whole, the chapters in this volume clearly indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the field. They also point to what needs to be done, the major intellectual concerns that should guide the research, and some of the more productive ways to approach the significant research questions. Overall, there is a sense of vitality to the quest, a feeling of breaking through old bonds, an eclecticism, and innovativeness that gives renewed life to the research enterprise.

We end where we began. The study of interest groups and interest representation is an "old" concern of political science, but one that should enjoy new life. It is one area that offers a rich variety of intellectual rewards of direct relevance to understanding the democratic experience.

References

- Bentley, Arthur F. 1908. *The Process of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Berry, Jeffrey M. 1977. *Lobbying for the People*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1984. *Feeding Hungry People*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- _____. 1988. *The Interest Group Society*. Boston: Scott Foresman/Little Brown.
- Berry, Jeffrey M., Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson. 1993. *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Bosso, Christopher J. 1987. *Pesticides and Politics: The Life Cycle of a Public Issue*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Browne, William P. 1988. *Private Interests, Public Policy, and American Agriculture*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Cigler, Allan J. 1986. "From Protest Group to Interest Group: The Making of American Agriculture Movement, Inc." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*, 2nd ed. Pp. 46-69. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

- _____. 1991. "Interest Groups: A Subfield in Search of an Identity." In William Crotty, ed., *Political Science: Looking to the Future*. Vol. IV. Pp. 99-135. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Cigler, Allan J., and John Mark Hansen. 1983. "Group Formation Through Protest: The American Agriculture Movement." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*. 1st ed. Pp. 84-109. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Cigler, Allan J., and Burdett A. Loomis. 1983. "Introduction: The Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*. 1st ed. Pp. 1-30. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Dexter, Lewis Anthony. 1970. *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol. 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1978. *Home Style*. Boston: Little Brown.
- _____. 1990. *Watching Politicians: Essays on Participant Observation*. Berkeley: University of California Institute of Governmental Studies Press.
- Ferguson, Thomas, and Joel Rogers. 1986. *Right Turn*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Gray, Virginia, and David Lowery. 1992. "Corporatism Without Labor? Industrial Policymaking in the American States." *Journal of Public Policy* 11:315-329.
- _____. 1993. "The Diversity of State Interest Group Systems." *Western Political Quarterly* 46.
- _____. 1988. "Interest Group Politics and Economic Crunch in the U.S. States." *American Political Science Review* 82:109-131.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1991. *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1985. "The Political Economy of Group Membership." *American Political Science Review* 79:79-96.
- Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert H. Salisbury, and Robert L. Nelson. 1990. "Inner Circles or Hollow Cores? Elite Networks in National Policy Systems." *Journal of Politics* 52:356-390.
- Heinz, John P., and Robert H. Salisbury. 1993. *The Hollow Core*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lowery, David, and Virginia Gray. 1993. "The Density of State Interest Group Systems." *Journal of Politics*. 55:191-206.
- McConnell, Grant. 1966. *Private Power and American Democracy*. New York: Knopf.
- McFarland, Andrew S. 1984. *Common Cause*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Olson, Mancur, Jr., 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 1992. *The Third House: Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Salisbury, Robert H. 1969. "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13:1-32.
- _____. 1975. "Interest Groups." In Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*. Vol 4. Pp. 171-228. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- _____. 1983. "Interest Groups: Toward a New Understanding." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*, 1st ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- _____. 1984. "Interest Representation: The Dominance of Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 7:64-76.
- _____. 1986. "Washington Lobbyists: A Collective Portrait." In Allen J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*. 2nd ed. Pp. 146-161. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

-
- . 1990. "The Paradox of Interests in Washington, D.C.: More Groups and Less Clout." In Anthony S. King, ed., *The New American Political System*. 2nd ed. Pp. 203-230. Washington, DC: AEI Press.
- Salisbury, Robert H., John P. Heinz, Edward O. Laumann, and Robert L. Nelson. 1987. "Who Works With Whom? Interest Group Alliances and Opposition." *American Political Science Review* 81:1217-1234.
- Salisbury, Robert H., and Paul Johnson. 1989. "Who You Know Versus What You Know: The Uses of Government Experience for Washington Lobbyists." *American Journal of Political Science* 33:175-195.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, and John T. Tierney. 1986. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Tierney, John T. 1987. "Organized Interests in Health Politics and Policymaking." *Medical Care Review* 44:89-118.
- Truman, David B. 1951. *The Governmental Process*. New York: Knopf.
- Walker, Jack L. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
-
- . 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups." *American Political Science Review* 77:390-406.

Interest Structures and Policy Domains: A Focus for Research

Robert H. Salisbury

Broadly speaking, a focus on interest representation entails three component parts: a conception of interests expressed in due course in substantively specific terms, such as pension guarantees for widget makers, or a clearer night sky in L.A.; a conception of the process of interest representation, including formulation and revision; and a theoretically grounded assessment of the impact on public decision outcomes of the actions involved in the interest representation process. Interest representation by itself is neither a synonym for policy making (cf. Bentley 1908), nor a sufficiently strong influence as to require no other factors for a full understanding of policy outcomes. It is possible to manipulate the English language in such a way as to reach the linguistic conclusion that it is all we need to know, but I do not think it is intellectually profitable to do so (again, cf. Bentley 1908). The next step in my argument will, I hope, explain why. This involves my understanding of the meaning of interests.

I think that no one who works for more than fifteen minutes in the interest group field can entirely neglect the very difficult problem of what she or he means by the word "interest." Even if I could, I would not retrace the sometimes tortured peregrinations of my own travels on this quest, but it does strike me that in a lot of the literature authors are unsure of their ultimate target. Too often they have not asked themselves what they mean by "interest," or, if asked, they have not answered. As a result, we often know and seem even to care more about who is active and what they do than about what they want and why.

Let me simply assert my current working definition (Salisbury 1991) of the concept of interest, declare it to be superior to other versions, and having offered some small justifications for the conclusion, push on. I hold the view that an interest arises from the conjunction between some private value held by a political actor--public officials or groups thereof as well as private sector operatives--and some authoritative action or proposed action by government. Neither private value nor governmental action (actual or potential) can by

itself generate the interest. Likelihoods and propensities may abound, but unless the conjunction occurs, there is no interest. It follows from this notion that interests are constantly being defined, redefined, and even discovered, such as when some new action proposal appears on the political scene. It also follows that among the core tasks lobbyists must perform is monitoring ongoing processes of policy development so as to recognize newly emergent interests.

The next point I would make is the assertion of a contradiction. The worst way to study interest groups is by means of the case study, but virtually the only way to do research in this realm is via the case study. To resolve this paradox, the problems must be redefined: we must ask, "Cases of What?" Not, I would argue a case (or two) of policy making in Peoria, or of citizen leagues in Colorado, or union locals in universities. There is nothing the matter with any of these topics or the hundreds of possible variants thereof, but aside from their ready availability to the observer/student, there is no basis for choice among them. Among the sins of our profession over many years have been two of special applicability here: one, our tendency to avoid what is difficult, as defining a universe of group activity so that it may be sampled systematically, and, two, our bias for studying the political things we approve of while disregarding the stuff we do not like. Once upon a time, this resulted in numerous studies of labor unions but few of business corporations. In recent years, we haven't sympathized as much with labor and that ratio has been reversed, but so-called "citizens" groups and the issues in which they have been major actors have received more attention than any of the old economic "sectors."

The principal strategy by which to escape the case study limitations must be one that permits aggregation of case results into larger and more encompassing structures. Mancur Olson serves us well as a guide to two quite different aggregation processes. In *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965), he developed a theoretical argument that did not depend on one or two empirical observations, but could be brought back into the empirical fray and applied in a wide variety of interpretive circumstances. In *The Rise and Decline of Nations* (1982), by contrast, he builds his structural theory on a foundation of case observations. In the process, however, he omits a good many inconvenient cases and claims far more generality for his theoretical position than it can bear. Olson's experience should not be taken as the inevitable consequence of deductive versus inductive aggregation, but students of interest group phenomena must be very sensitive indeed to the pitfalls lurking in each path.

Briefly, deductive analysis, on the evidence of those, mainly political economists, who have employed it most, is likely to arrive at quite crude conceptions of what interests are at stake or the configurations of groups active in particular struggle. Their case study applications often have positive and reasonably robust results, but there is nearly always much noise, much

unexplained variance, and a great deal yet to be understood about what interests are really involved (cf. Mitchell and Munger 1991). I think that Messrs. Stigler, Becker, Peltzman, Buchanan, Tullock, Tollison et al. have remarkably little to teach political scientists regarding the fundamental processes of interest representation, and at least one reason for this is that they have nothing whatever to say about the process of interest formation. As a matter of professional commitment, the "public choice" students of interest groups do not entertain the question of what values motivate political actors. Since, in my view, that is a necessary part of interest formation, it follows that its neglect must lead to a seriously inadequate foundation for analysis.

We don't have many examples of large scale inductive studies of interest groups. One, in which I took part, has been reported in several journal articles and now in a book, *The Hollow Core* (1993). In that study, my colleagues and I selected just over three hundred organizations known, in various ways, to have been active regarding issues in the policy domains of agriculture, energy, health, or labor. We asked each organization who represented their interests in Washington, and interviewed 774 of those nominated. In the course of those interviews, rather lengthy and highly structured, we asked what government officials these interest representatives most often encountered, and we then interviewed 301 of them. The scale of that study--indeed, even the scale of the preliminary "soaking and poking" phase--is clearly beyond the resources of most investigators. But Bill Browne (1988), with a much smaller bankroll, interviewed close to 300 agricultural groups, Terry Moe (1980) surveyed the membership of five, and the principle of the sample survey has been employed by Jack Walker (1991), and by Schlozman and Tierney (1985) to encompass quite substantial numbers of cases. We do have some valid examples of inductive aggregation, therefore, and I think it would be fair to add one other, of a rather different type. David Truman's magisterial volume (1951) pulled together an enormous amount of case study literature in the course of building both a theory of group formation and behavior, and a description of the structures of group relationships with governmental agencies. Grant McConnell (1966) and Ted Lowi (1969) represent two other attempts of a similar kind, less comprehensive in scope, perhaps less ambitious in purpose, and, in my view, much less successful in result.

It is obvious, I presume, that my own preference in this business lies with induction. I want to know what the map looks like, what the political substance consists of, not just the abstract principles that make it go. What does that suggest one needs to do by way of preparation, to get ready for a career, or at least a sustained foray, into interest group research? I am strongly of the belief that three types of study are essential. Actually, they are necessary priors to the understanding of every aspect of political life, but I will link them here more particularly to the field of interest groups.

Recall that my concept of interest is built upon whatever people value. Economists may choose not to inquire into what people want and why, preferring the rough-and-ready assumption of income maximization, but political scientists should not be so cavalier. They should find out what values people hold and how they vary across time and space. Survey research is often helpful in this effort, of course, but it is never sufficient. Other lines of inquiry are incumbent upon the students of interest groups, if they would gain a command of the value foundation of interest.

Let me introduce this with a story from my college days. As I considered what courses to take in my junior year, two possibilities intrigued me, but they were offered at the same hour. One was a course on the French Revolution and Napoleon, the other was a course on the economic geography of North America. I asked my parents for their advice, and they did not hesitate. Take the economic geography course, they said. You will surely read about Napoleon on your own, but you won't so readily get a thorough grounding in the other. They were absolutely right. In the economic geography course, I learned about the spatial distribution of agriculture, industry, and commerce, past and present, and why the economies of this place or that were constructed as they were. I absorbed an immense amount of detailed data, and while much of the course is obsolete today, the baseline it provided has served me extremely well for a long time.

It is surely true that no one can understand American interest groups without knowing a good deal about their economic foundations. By that I mean two distinct things. One is the substance and location of each economic interest -- where they mine coal, grow cranberries, make washing machines, have strong UAW locals, and so on. The other is the economic component of interests that are not altogether material. One may formulate the idea in terms of social class or use some other euphemism, but it would be foolish in the extreme not to recognize the admixture of economic self-interest involved in much group activity that is not strictly confined to the advancement of material well being. What kind of a place is Atlanta, Peoria, or Omaha? What interests are likely to emerge from those foundations? "You have to know the territory," as the opening song in *The Music Man* says, and quite right, too.

It should not need saying, but I will anyway--the reason for studying the spatial distribution of economic activity--i.e., economic geography--is that despite the profusion of PACs and Washington representatives, and other symptoms of the nationalization of American politics, it remains true that cities, countries, and states still matter, and every member of Congress is elected from a specific constituency. West Virginia is not just like Wyoming. Tip O'Neill's aphorism remains in force: much politics is still local.

The second realm of study I believe to be necessary for anyone who would understand the values that give rise to interests in the U.S. is the ethnocultural pattern of settlement, migration, and development of the nation.

More than twenty years ago, Dan Elazar (1966) demonstrated what a powerful heuristic even the most elementary ethnocultural map of settlement patterns could be. Since then, there has been a bounteous flow of research on the ethnocultural components of the American culture (eg, Thernstrom 1980). We possess a far richer understanding of both the history and present distribution of nationality and language groups and a veritable flood of work on the rich religious dimensions of American culture (Wald 1992). It has become abundantly clear that no political scientist can legitimately claim expertise regarding the value foundations of partisanship, public opinion, or voting behavior without a command of their religious, ethnic, racial, and cultural foundations. Accordingly, each of us must gain reasonable familiarity with them, learning the difference between American and Southern Baptists, Missouri Synod and American Lutherans, where the Scotch-Irish settled, and whence cometh the Italians so prominent in Northern California.

These are not matters to be studied only, or even mainly, in the cross-section, either. They are profoundly historical in the sense that settlements, migrations, conversions, and transformations occur in particular historical contexts, some long ago, some quite lately, and most are highly dynamic, continuing to change through time in numbers, locations, and salience. We know for example, that American communities have always experienced a high degree of population turnover (50 percent each decade according to two of the best studies of 19th century communities: Curti 1959; Thernstrom 1964), but it may be, nevertheless, that the value foundations of interests in such a community are relatively stable over a long period. My point here is to urge upon every student of interest groups a full immersion in the history and present circumstances of ethnocultural and religious groups in the United States. I might note, in passing, that one of the most distinguished and in every way admirable political scientists of the century, V.O. Key, Jr., was a devoted practitioner of these lines of inquiry, and they gave substantial shape to his political science.

There is a third area of investigation for the student of interests, also to be entered in its historical dimension as well as in the cross-section. It is essential that we know in reasonable detail the development, distribution, and dynamics of the institutions that shape and are shaped by the culture. There is a powerful individualistic normative bias to political theory and to large portions of empirical political science as well. It would take us too far afield to explore the reasons for and consequences of the persistence of this bias, but it has left us too often uninformed about the impact of organizations, upon both those inside and those beyond the boundaries of any particular institution. The so-called "new institutionalism" that has lately captured the imaginations of political economists represents a step in the right direction, and books by Alan Trachtenberg (1982), Olivier Zunz (1990), and other cultural historians are also improving our grasp of the institutional realities of the last century or so. As students of interests, we simply cannot afford to

ignore the institutional developments of the major industries of the country (Chandler 1977), labor unions, professional associations (Abbott 1988; Bledstein 1976), K-12 schools (see the several works of Lawrence Cremin and David Tyack) colleges and universities, military services, and various entertainment industries including professional sports, theatre (Levine 1988), opera, mass media, and on and on. None of us will know enough, but together we will perhaps see bigger portions of a larger picture. We will see, for instance, the emergence of multiple modes of spectatorism, differentiated by social class, which occurred with astonishing rapidity over about twenty years, from the early 1880s to the first years of the twentieth century. We will know that this is more or less simultaneous with the institutionalization of the U.S. Congress (Polsby 1968) and the emergence of a large professional federal bureaucracy (Skowronek 1983). And we will quickly link these changes to the parallel growth of large scale industrial firms and the expansion of cities. None of the profound transformations in the structure of American life was independent of the others. Moreover, we will also discover that these developments created basic elements of the infrastructure upon which lobbying in its modern form could begin to flourish. For it was these large organizations, durable and possessing resources for the purpose, that as an increasingly active government more and more impinged upon them, could begin to identify and pursue their interests.

I have not even mentioned the interest politics engaged in by governmental organizations, including states, counties, municipalities, and assorted others, sometimes acting alone and sometimes through associations. Whatever the form of their action, it is and was interest politics they engaged in, even though many of the traditional concerns of an interest group investigator might not be relevant to these governmental actors.

The intellectual domain of the student of interest groups cannot be restricted to voluntary associations, however. If we are to study the "interested" parties, our scope must include every active unit, from the isolated individual to the most complex coalition of organizations several steps removed from any input from individual members, that engages in interest-based activity relative to the processes of making public policy. I recognize that this constitutes a supremely imperial conception of our field. So be it. What should we leave out? What organizations and/or active individuals fail to qualify? I see no need to restrict our jurisdiction in advance and much reason to be ready to incorporate more rather than less organizational variety. Indeed, it seems clear to me that our research heretofore has suffered more from omissions than from too expansive a notion of what to include. Let us not be reluctant to extend our reach in the future.

The last topic I propose to address is the most important. In its simplest and most salient form, it is this: "What questions shall we ask?" For the moment, let me remain on a simple level. For decades the most common

question guiding interest group research has been the question of influence. What group or groups have how much influence over policy-making is the common thread that connect Dahl to Schattschneider, Bauer, Pool, and Dexter to Lowi, McConnell to Browne, and Chubb to Stigler. Push it back a step to ask what factors affect group influence, and Truman is brought into the stream. Virtually every discussion of PACs sooner or later comes around to the question of how much influence PAC contributors have on electoral outcomes and/or policy choices.

At first glance, this may seem to be an altogether appropriate focus of inquiry. After all, in many areas of political science, from voting to President-Congress relations to Supreme Court decisions to international relations, a good deal of attention is devoted to who wins, who loses, and why. The game metaphor runs very deep in our business, and keeping score, registering victories and defeats from one season to the next, and assessing the relative standing of the competitors are among our chief delights (and quite possibly why so many of us are also devoted to baseball). The trouble is that the game metaphor is profoundly misleading regarding the underlying character of much of the political process. Very often there is no clear resolution, no definitive conclusion to the process by which interests are articulated and pursued. "Play" continues, moving from one venue to another perhaps, the tides of success for particular participants ebbing and flowing, while the structure of the "game" slowly evolves. As the saga unfolds, individual episodes may be singled out for separate treatment, but unless they are seen in their larger historical/developmental context, any particular story, however melodramatic it seems to be, is likely to generate more misunderstanding than insight.

Think of it this way. Does it make much sense to ask who is the most influential member of the U.S. Senate? Or, insofar as we would grasp the essential meaning and impact of their decisions, is it a high priority to determine the influence rank among the Supreme Court Justices? It is not that influence is irrelevant; it is simply not the best way to frame the central questions. Rather than trying to link group activity to influence, I recommend a focus on the relationships among groups and between groups and officials. It is the structure of these relationships, aggregated from some reasonably substantial number of discrete observations and thus embracing more than a moment or two of time, that seems to me of greatest interest. Implicitly, a good many studies in the past did center on this question. McConnell's study of the American Farm Bureau Foundation (1953) and Garceau (1941) or Kelley (1956) on the American Medical Association were pretty clearly examining hegemonic organizations, dominant in their respective policy domains with only a few feeble competitors inside government or out. As Heinz (1971), Browne (1988), and others (Heinz et al. 1993) have shown, the hegemonic structure of the agriculture domain has given way to one of fragmented "niche" politics that no single organization dominates. This

process, more or less duplicated in the energy and health areas as well, is partly a response to the proliferation of interests generated by technology-driven specialization, as well as to the rise to active prominence of various kinds of "citizen" groups, and to the sheer increase in numbers and sophistication of interest representatives of all kinds. As such a general move toward a kind of "complexification" of a policy domain, matched, by the way, by the decentralization of power in Congress since the mid 1970s, is a fairly long term and broadly observable trend of very considerable importance. And, if the structure of a policy domain were to begin to evolve in a different direction, that too should attract our early and careful attention.

The research tactics appropriate for investigating the interest structures of policy domains are of enormous importance and will require our careful and creative attention for some time to come. Our group, building on our own earlier work (Heinz and Laumann 1982; Laumann and Knoke 1987), employed a number of techniques that worked very well, but we also made some fairly serious mistakes. It might be worthwhile sometime soon to devote a session or two of some conference to a serious close critique of questions and devices used in interest group research. But that, as they say, is another story.

References

- Abbott, Andrew. 1988. *The System of the Professions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bentley, Arthur F. 1908. *The Process of Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bledstein, Burton. 1976. *The Culture of Professionalism*. New York: Norton.
- Browne, William. 1988. *Private Interests, Public Policy and American Agriculture*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Chandler, Alfred. 1977. *The Visible Hand*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Curti, Merle. 1959. *The Making of an American Community*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Elazar, Daniel. 1966. *American Federalism, A View from the States*. New York: Crowell.
- Garceau, Oliver. 1941. *The Political Life of the American Medical Association*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Heinz, John P. 1971. "The Political Impasse in Farm Support Legislation." *Yale Law Journal*. 71:952-978.
- Heinz, John P., and Edward O. Laumann. 1982. *Chicago Lawyers*. New York: Basic Books.
- Heinz, John P., and Robert H. Salisbury. 1993. *The Hollow Core*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kelley, Stanley. 1956. *Professional Public Relations and Political Power*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Laumann, Edward O., and David Knoke. 1987. *The Organizational State*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Levine, Lawrence. 1988. *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lowi, Theodore. 1969. *The End of Liberalism*. New York: Norton.
- McConnell, Grant. 1966. *Private Power and American Democracy*. New York: Knopf.

- _____. 1953. *The Decline of Agrarian Democracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mitchell, William C., and Michael C. Munger. 1991. "Economic Models of Interest Groups: An Introductory Survey." *American Journal of Political Science* 35:512-546.
- Moc, Terry. 1980. *The Organization of Interests*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. 1982. *The Rise and Decline of Nations*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Polsby, Nelson. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *American Political Science Review* 62:144-68.
- Salisbury, Robert H. 1991. "Putting Interests Back Into Interest Groups." In Allan Cigler and Burdett Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*, 3rd edition. Pp. 371-385. Washington, DC: CQ. Press.
- Schlozman, Kay, and John Tierney. 1985. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Skowronck, Stephen. 1983. *Building A New American State*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Thernstrom, Stephen. 1964. *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. ed. 1980. *Harvard Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Trachtenberg, Alan. 1982. *The Incorporation of America*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Truman, David B. 1951. *The Governmental Process*. New York: Knopf.
- Wald, Kenneth D. 1992. *Religion and Politics in the United States*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Walker, Jack L. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America: Patrons, Professions, and Social Movements*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Zunz, Olivier. 1990. *Making America Corporate, 1870-1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

An Agenda for Research on Interest Groups

Jeffrey M. Berry

Interest group representation lies at the heart of arguments about the nature of democracy in America. The degree to which people are represented before government by advocacy organizations must be considered in any defense or critique of our system of government. There's much we know about interest group representation and much we don't know. This essay focuses on the latter question--what we don't know, or more precisely, what we know we don't know.

Although studies of interest groups steadily accumulate, it is a relatively small subfield within the discipline. The sheer amount of scholarship on interest groups is considerably less than in other subfields in the area of American national politics, such as Congress, the Presidency, or parties and elections. There is little chance of this changing in the short term as relatively few doctoral students choose to do their work in this area. The latest compilation of dissertations in *PS* lists a total of 117 dissertations completed during the previous year in the categories of American Government or Public Policy. Of these, seven appear to be about interest groups. (Titles can be imprecise, so this is a rough estimate). That's just 6 percent of new Ph.D's, who have at least a short-term commitment to interest group scholarship. When dissertations on social movements are included, the percentage rises to 10 percent (Frankel 1991).

Why is it that the study of interest groups does not attract more disciples? There's no way of objectively evaluating the intrinsic importance of this area in comparison to the other subfields in American government. There are some other factors, however, which have kept the numbers of interest group scholars down. First, scholars, like amoebas, reproduce themselves. Since there are relatively few senior scholars at the major graduate schools who do work primarily in the field of interest groups, it's understandable that few graduate students choose this topic as their specialty. This has not been a cyclical phenomenon--I can't think of any "golden period" of interest group research, when there were large numbers of senior scholars working in the field.

Second, there is little in the way of available data sets which can be utilized as the basis for a dissertation. Most national opinion surveys contain

few, if any, questions about interest groups. The Federal Election Commission's data sets on PACs are a notable exception to this lack of off-the-shelf, ready-to-use data. Consequently, thesis writers wanting to focus on interest groups must either get funding to go to Washington to do field work (difficult to obtain); study state or local groups (logistically easy to do, but professionally problematic since state and local interest group studies do not seem to receive as much attention as studies of national interest groups); or do research that is historical or interpretative in nature.

Third, teaching jobs in American politics tend not to be defined as interest group positions. Departments are much more likely to indicate a preference for an expert on Congress, the Presidency, the bureaucracy, or political behavior. When the subfield of interest groups is listed, it tends to be grouped with other specialties, particularly political parties or social movements. Thus, aspiring American Government scholars may come to see other subfields as more marketable than interest groups.

Yet for the young scholar wishing to pursue research on interest groups, the fact that there are relatively few people working in the area can be seen as good news. It is easy to identify topics that are original and not derivative of existing studies. Let me highlight some of the broad areas which I think deserve greater attention from interest group scholars.

The Internal Organization of Interest Groups. Surprisingly, we know little about how interest groups operate. I say "surprisingly," because some of the richest theoretical work on interest groups relates to their internal operations. Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) revolutionized the way we think about interest groups. Olson's book is a theory of incentives, of why people choose to join interest groups. It has spawned considerable work by formal theorists trying to amplify and fine tune the theory, and by empirical researchers trying to determine how much of it is true (Walker 1991).

Although this research has markedly increased our knowledge of what draws people to interest groups, and from where these organizations draw their financial support, the internal operations of interest groups have not been adequately studied. Olson's seminal work has failed to stimulate a broader examination of the relationship between members and their organization. Most conspicuously, little work has been done on the governance of interest groups. This is an important area, because it is critical to our understanding of how rank-and-file preferences are incorporated into organizational decision-making. What is known is intriguing. Typically, there is not a lot of direct rank-and-file input by members into the deliberations of the interest groups to which they belong. When the members of a lobbying group are other organizations, it is certainly conceivable that leaders are more solicitous of the opinions of their supporters.

The broader point is that there is reason to believe that the relationships between leaders and followers are significantly different among all the major types of lobbying organizations: citizen groups, trade associations,

professional associations, labor unions, PACs, and corporations.¹ We need to determine how they differ and how they are similar in the way that governance is carried out. How is information from followers gathered? What are the formal provisions for participation of members in organizational decision-making? To what degree are decisions over what to lobby on congruent with member preferences? How are conflicts between different parts of the membership mediated?

Recently, for example, over 50 mostly small wineries withdrew from the Wine Institute, the lobbying arm of the California wine industry. Conflict between the small wineries and the giant E. & J. Gallo Winery, which dominated the Institute's leadership structure, had been going on for some time without resolution. The small wineries felt that policy was being dictated by the Gallo family, and that they had little say in the organization. A conflict emerged between another large winery, Robert Mondavi, and Gallo over the basic direction for the Institute's advocacy, and Mondavi has withdrawn as well (Fisher 1992). One assumes that it is not unusual to find tension in a trade association between large producers and small producers. Journalistic accounts of how a split within a trade group has hampered its lobbying on a specific issue are common, yet there is very little in the scholarly literature on how trade groups deal with their competing constituencies. We really don't know the answer to the basic question of whether small producers are generally better off with their own trade association, giving up the financial might of their larger brethren, in exchange for an advocacy voice that more narrowly represents their unique interests.

These governance questions are questions about representation. More specifically, they are questions about how well people's views are represented within an organization, and how members' views correspond to what their lobbying organization communicates to government. There is, of course, some valuable work that has been done in this area. Michael McCann's (1986) analysis of participation in public interest groups and Allan Cigler's (1986) study of the internal organization of the American Agriculture Movement are just two examples of interesting research on this topic. What is needed now are systematic comparisons by scholars grounded in organizational theory as well as in interest group politics.

The Impact of Participation on Interest Group Members. After asking to what degree do interest groups allow their members to participate, it is natural to ask how such participation affects members. Do interest groups help to create better citizens? Classical theorists, such as Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, argued that participation changes people's attitudes and leaves them as better, more capable citizens. In such classical theory, the cause-and-effect relationship between political participation and the enhancement of citizenship is built around the expectation that participation will take place in a face-to-face setting. Many contemporary analysts, like Benjamin Barber

(1984) and Jane Mansbridge (1980), see face-to-face interaction as critical in producing new, strengthened forms of democracy.

There is not the same kind of theoretical foundation to guide critical thinking about how participation in interest groups, which does not involve face-to-face interaction, might affect members (Berry, Portney, and Thomson 1993). Many interest groups offer members little more in the way of participation than the opportunity of writing a check for donations or yearly dues. There is, however, a considerable range in membership activity in interest groups. Face-to-face interaction is possible in local groups, local chapters of national groups, or at annual meetings of an association. Members may also show a high degree of involvement, even though they don't personally interact with other members by donating significant sums of money or by writing letters to policy-makers at the urging of their organization.

One intriguing hypothesis is that participation in some types of interest group may cause people to become more confident about government and their ability to influence it, while participation in other types of organizations may make people more cynical. Cynicism could be a by-product of organizations that do little to solicit membership opinion, are generally unsuccessful in achieving their policy goals, or whose internal communications seem to reinforce people's belief that governmental decisions reflect the dominance of "special interests" over the "public interest." More positive views of the political system might be nurtured by organizations which are more participatory, more successful, or less antagonistic toward the role of government.

Research on membership attitudes in a group can be difficult, because it is likely to require a high level of cooperation by the organization. And evaluating change in attitudes or behavior over time can necessitate expensive research designs. Nevertheless, such research could make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the role interest groups play—or fail to play—in promoting a democratic society.

Business in National Politics. For years, the major fault line among those who wrote about interest groups was between those who believed that America was a pluralist democracy, and those who believed that America was ruled by a power elite. The continuing criticism of both models gradually eroded that fault line and, unfortunately, among interest group scholars, the debate over the role of business in public policy-making has withered away.

Exactly why the role of business has not attracted more attention from interest group scholars is unclear. There are, of course, studies of individual industries and some broader work as well (Vogel 1989; Martin 1991). Developments in recent years have raised many new questions about the influence of business groups in national politics. The Reagan era and the ability of big business to seize the preeminent spot on the nation's political agenda is a striking counterpoint to years, when business felt that it was always dealing with somebody else's issues (Vogel 1979).

The explosion in the numbers of business trade groups active in Washington politics, and the increasing numbers of corporations which feel the need for direct Washington representation beyond their trade association memberships, are significant trends that deserve closer scrutiny. The implications of the growing globalization of the economy on the political influence of both American and foreign business lobbies need to be explored as well.

There is also a need for broad-based theory. The commonly accepted model of business and government cooperating to protect the status quo, exemplified by Lowi's classic, *The End of Liberalism* (1969), does not seem to capture the dynamic nature of a highly competitive international economic environment. More sophisticated models of how business coordinates its "classwide" interests would also be useful (Useem 1984). How big business converts its financial resources into political resources is another area which has not been well researched (Wilson 1981).

The broadest question, of course, is whether business power is increasing or decreasing. Robert Salisbury has written that the increasing number of interest groups has destabilized the policy-making system and has weakened interest groups overall: "these groups have come to Washington out of need and dependence rather than because they have influence" (1990:229). Paul Peterson (1990-91) has argued similarly that the overall power of interest groups has declined in recent years. Neither analysis specifically compares business to other sectors of the interest group community. If the influence of interest groups has indeed waned, has the influence of business declined at the same rate as that of other types of interest groups?

Policy Making in Dense Interest Group Environments. The sharp rise in the number of interest groups has been examined by many scholars. The interest group explosion led to the collapse of many subgovernments and the formation of larger issue networks. The nature of issue networks is just now beginning to receive attention, and the work by Salisbury and his colleagues has helped us to understand the interrelationships among network participants (Salisbury et al. 1987; Heinz et al. 1990). The porous boundaries and shifting coalitions of issue networks make them considerably more difficult to analyze than the policy making systems of the not-too-distant past. When a small number of interest groups dominated policy making in their area, the implications for democratic theory seemed much clearer.

The sheer number of groups active in a single major policy area can be staggering. A recent report identified 741 health care organizations represented in Washington (Pear 1992). Interest group scholars need to develop explanatory frameworks to improve analysis of how policy-making takes place when there are so many actors involved. Issue networks are highly conflictual, but political scientists have not yet created satisfactory models that incorporate high levels of interest group conflict as a norm (Berry 1989).

There are signs that government has made some adaptations to policy-making environments, where there is a high degree of conflict and large numbers of participants. A prime example is the increasing use of negotiated regulations ("reg-negs") during the administrative rulemaking process. The Negotiated Rulemaking Act of 1990 has given an increased impetus to such proceedings. Reg-negs appear to be successful in bringing long-standing adversaries to the bargaining table and getting them to agree to compromise their differences. Agencies give up some of their autonomy but get binding agreements in return and avoid having their regulations held up by years of litigation. Such structured negotiations may actually make policy-making more democratic by opening up the political process and ensuring that all relevant actors are included in the bargaining (Berry 1993). Steven Kelman (1992) goes as far as to argue that what he calls "cooperationist institutions" will deliver policy decisions that are more public-spirited. Research is needed to test whether these optimistic assessments are valid.

Structured negotiations are just one way agencies have responded to the rising numbers of interest groups and chronic conflict within their policy making environment. There are surely other relevant adaptations they have made, but little research has been done on how the relationship between administrative agencies and interest groups have changed over time. The executive branch has grown significantly since the 1960s--how has this affected interest group politics? For example, four federal agencies currently oversee policy on the narrow issue of privately owned wetlands (Kriz 1991). How common is it for interest groups to have competing agencies to plead their cases to? Likewise, the overlapping committee jurisdictions and multiple referrals that are so common these days in Congress may have important consequences for interest group advocacy.

The four research areas examined in this paper provide by no means a comprehensive review of the state of interest group scholarship. Valuable research on interest groups and agenda building has been done by Anne Costain (1992), and by Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones (1991). John Mark Hansen's (1991) study of the farm lobby is an excellent example of thick, historical analysis of a changing relationship between advocacy groups and policymakers. Also focusing on agricultural groups, William Browne (1990) utilized niche theory to explain how increasing numbers of groups in a policy area are able to maintain themselves. The study of interest groups is progressing, but there is much to be learned and there are great opportunities for new people entering the field.

Notes

1. Even though corporations are not membership organizations, the question is still relevant. Corporations have various constituencies, both internal and external. We know little

about how these distinct--and sometimes competing--constituencies are incorporated into the decision-making process.

References

- Barber, Benjamin. 1984. *Strong Democracy*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Bryan D. Jones. 1991. "Agenda Dynamics and Subsystems." *Journal of Politics* 53:1044-74.
- Berry, Jeffrey M. 1989. "Subgovernments, Issue Networks, and Political Conflict." In Richard A. Harris and Sidney M. Milkis, eds., *Remaking American Politics*. Pp. 239-260. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- _____. 1993. "Citizen Groups and the Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.
- Berry, Jeffrey M., Kent E. Portney, and Ken Thomson. 1993. *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Browne, William P. 1990. "Organized Interests and Their Issue Niches: A Search for Pluralism in a Policy Domain." *Journal of Politics* 52:477-509.
- Cigler, Allan W. 1986. "From Protest Group to Interest Group." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, ed. *Interest Group Politics*, 2nd ed. Pp. 46-69. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly.
- Costain, Anne N. 1992. *Inviting Women's Rebellion*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fisher, Lawrence M. 1992. "Wine Maker Quits Lobby in California." *The New York Times*. June 27.
- Frankel, Warren B. 1991. "Doctoral Dissertations in Political Science." *PS* 24:837-53.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1991. *Gaining Access*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert H. Salisbury, and Robert L. Nelson. 1990. "Inner Circles or Hollow Cores? Elite Networks in National Policy Systems." *Journal of Politics* 52:356-90.
- Kelman, Steven. 1992. "Adversary and Cooperationist Institutions for Conflict Resolution in Public Policymaking." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 11:178-206.
- Kriz, Margaret E. 1991. "Swamp Fighting." *National Journal* August 3.
- Lowi, Theodore J. 1969. *The End of Liberalism*. New York: Norton.
- McCann, Michael W. 1986. *Taking Reform Seriously*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Martin, Cathy J. 1991. *Shifting the Burden*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mansbridge, Jane J. 1980. *Beyond Adversary Democracy*. New York: Basic Books.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pear, Robert. 1992. "Conflicting Aims in Booming Health Care Field." *The New York Times*. March 18.
- Peterson, Paul E. 1990-91. "The Rise and Fall of Special Interests." *Political Science Quarterly* 105:539-556.
- Salisbury, Robert H. 1990. "The Paradox of Interest Groups in Washington--More Groups, Less Clout." In Anthony King, ed. *The New American Political System*, 2nd ed. Pp. 203-229. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.
- Salisbury, Robert H., John P. Heinz, Edward O. Laumann, and Robert L. Nelson. 1987. "Who Works with Whom?" *American Political Science Review* 81:1217-34.
- Useem, Michael. 1984. *The Inner Circle*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Vogel, David. 1979. "How Business Responds to Opposition." Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC.

- _____. 1989. *Fluctuating Fortunes*. New York: Basic Books.
- Walker, Jack L. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Wilson, James Q. 1981. "Democracy and the Corporation." In Robert Hessen, ed. *Does Big Business Rule America?* Pp. 35-39. Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Research Gaps in the Study of Interest Group Representation

Allan J. Cigler

A number of years ago, I was asked to prepare a subfield review of the interest group politics literature in conjunction with a project sponsored by the Midwest Political Science Association (Cigler 1991). I developed genuine ambivalence about the state of our knowledge concerning political interest groups as a consequence. It was clear that the subfield had made great strides in overcoming its earlier reputation as "undertilled," lessening the gap between the perceived importance of the subject, and the quantity and quality of research upon which firm generalizations could be derived. A number of studies had been published based upon large, systematically collected data sets, and explanatory theory was well-developed in certain areas central to the understanding of interest group representation. Yet it was also apparent that researchers had only scratched the surface of the vast, dynamic, and complex world of organized political influence.

I was particularly intrigued by the imbalance of research efforts that was reflected in the literature: some areas of inquiry, such as the collective action problem or the fund raising and spending activities of political action committees, had received considerable attention, while others, especially research concerns focusing upon intra-organizational matters and group impact in the policy process, seemed relatively neglected. Much was known about certain types of organized interests (agriculture and public interest groups come to mind) and organizational involvement in certain policy sectors (agriculture, energy, and health care in particular), while other organized interests and policy sectors appeared to be understudied.

In large measure, data availability has been the major determinant of the interest group politics research agenda, framing both the questions we explore, and the topics we avoid. For example, the campaign finance laws of 1971 and 1974 made the role of organized interests in the electoral process more visible by requiring that their sources of funds and campaign contributions be made available for public scrutiny, creating a "bull market" in research on group activities because of the availability of "large automatic subsidies that defray most research costs" (Arnold 1982:101). But hard data are more the exception than the rule in the study of organized interests, a fact that has

contributed to discouraging a number of political scientists from becoming interest group specialists.

Very personal and normative reasons also lie at the heart of some of our research choices. Although interest group scholars seem particularly fascinated with public interest groups because they appear to challenge so much of the logic of collective action literature, I suspect such organizations tend to attract disproportionate attention because of our ideological predilections, including our support for the interests they purport to represent, and the possibilities they afford for "balancing" and "checking" narrow, well-funded economic interests. Our pluralistic biases are related to our research choices.

Conversely, the relative lack of comprehensive, in-depth studies of individual organized interests probably has its roots in the discipline's low regard for case studies as a consequence of the behavioral revolution, as well as the intimidation researchers may feel in approaching private and semi-private organizations sensitive about their visibility and often reluctant to grant the access necessary for serious scholarly work. The reality of professional advancement in a publish-or-perish world, especially for young scholars, is a continual barrier to long-term study of an organization's political evolution, as are financial costs, especially if the organization is not located near the institutional base of the researcher.

In this short essay, I intend to highlight some of the areas where I believe the lack of empirically-derived information greatly limits our understanding of interest group representation. The most obvious problem is that there are broad areas of inquiry that have been virtually neglected by researchers. But even in some of our most active research areas, scholarly agendas may be far too narrow if our aim is a comprehensive portrait of special interest involvement in American politics.

Expanding the Interest Group Politics Research Agenda

There will always be research gaps in the study of organized interest representation, as scholars attempt to keep abreast of a dynamic subject matter. New interests constantly emerge, old interests often disappear, or are redefined, and the organizational vehicles that represent interests must continually adapt to a changing social and political context. At present, a number of research topics are deserving of scholarly priority.

There is no question, for example, that far more attention has been paid by researchers to the traditional membership group than to other organized interests important in the political arena, a major weakness of the literature in light of evidence that membership groups are a relatively small and declining proportion of the organized interest universe. My hope is that even social movements (usually studied by sociologists) and business corporations

(usually studied by economists) will increasingly become subjects of political science inquiry, since sociologists and economists are typically concerned with issues other than representation. "Staff" organizations, such as public interest law firms, with their narrow funding bases and small cadre of activists, have so far gotten little attention. Despite Salisbury's (1984) call for studies of the impact upon the policy process of institutions ranging from hospitals to policy research organizations to think tanks, such subjects seem not to attract political scientists. They should. And if states and localities, as many project, become the major policy battlegrounds during the next decade, studies of inter-governmental lobby organizations will take on increasing importance.

I think it is also unfortunate that inquiry into the influence process in certain key policy sectors, such as defense and foreign policy, has been left largely to political scientists with policy specialties in those areas, and remains unattractive as a research subject to interest group specialists, most of whom have a preference for studying domestic policy. For example, the role of foreign country lobbies and domestic lobbies for foreign interests, while receiving much media and popular attention, has yet to attract political science researchers. I suspect that researchers have avoided such subjects for a number of reasons, including apprehension that any results or conclusions they might present would call into question their scholarly objectivity and not be given due academic recognition. The lack of research on either the Japanese or Israeli lobby provides an obvious example. While researchers gravitate disproportionately to available hard data, issues of broad controversy are avoided.

Thanks to research conducted during the last decade (Walker 1983; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), we now have a pretty accurate portrait of the universe of organized interests and an understanding of how it has changed since the early 1960s. But assessing representation is more than merely recognizing the number and diversity of organized interests; it should also involve the comparative consideration of group and institutional resources (besides financial assets), including factors such as the skill, experience, and tenacity of organized interest representatives, the ability to mobilize followers for political purposes, and the ability to form coalitions with other special interests. Such dimensions are obviously very difficult to measure, and intensive field research may be the only data-gathering option. Despite the progress we have made, we are still at a pretty rudimentary level of understanding: we have far more knowledge of "scope" than of "bias" in the organized interest universe.

Consider the depth of our knowledge of national-level lobbyists representing organized interests. While we do have a better understanding of the tasks they engage in than of the portrait presented three decades ago by Milbraith (1963), thanks to the research efforts of a number of scholars (Salisbury 1986; Schlozman and Tierney 1986), there is nothing comparable to the work of Rosenthal (1992) on state-level lobbyists, which explores some

of the more intangible aspects of successfully representing organized interests. Basic recruitment and career ladder studies along the lines of those employed by students of legislatures (Barber 1965; Schlesinger 1965) would tell us something about the makeup, motivations, and abilities of those that represent the interests, and would be a great aid in assessing the successes and failures of various organizations in the representation process.

Let me comment briefly upon my own research interests which deal with demand aggregation concerns--particularly issues dealing with how groups are formed and maintained, explanations for the proliferation of groups, relations among interest organizations, and internal group decision making. Such concerns are at the core of representation, since they affect how citizen preferences are aggregated and translated through the mediating conduit of an interest group or other organized interest.

I think it is fair to say that research on demand aggregation represents some of the most analytically and theoretically elegant scholarly work in all of political science. For example, the loosely integrated body of literature often referred to as incentive theory, ranging from formal models of the public choice theorists to empirical tests of why and under what conditions individuals join groups, provides much insight into understanding collective action issues. Incentive theory suggests that the successful development of a political group involves a mutually satisfactory "exchange," with both leaders and followers experiencing a net gain from organizational involvement, as leaders offer incentives to members in exchange for support (Salisbury 1969). Our empirically based understanding of individual motivations and the nature of benefit mixes that underlie group mobilization and maintenance is quite high, and I doubt many interest group scholars would single out research on collective action as an understudied area. A research subfield has essentially been created by those interested in the collective action problem from a public choice perspective (Mitchell and Munger 1991).

But the very success of efforts directed toward understanding the nature of the calculus of group membership has had the inadvertent effect of creating a rather narrow research agenda on demand aggregation, leading scholars to focus upon a limited set of questions. Particularly weak is our understanding of resource acquisition by organized interests beyond membership dues, and the effect of variations in resource acquisition and funding mixes upon the nature of organizational representation. While it has become part of conventional wisdom to assert that many groups look outside of their membership for resources crucial to their survival (and that a large number of groups have no members at all), there is little research on the "other" exchange--the group entrepreneur/patron relationship. There is good evidence to suggest that patrons are more than merely passive sponsors responding to group requests (Walker 1983). Group mobilization can come from the top down rather than from the bottom up, and patrons--individuals, institutions, government agencies, or even other groups--are not neutral actors.

The impact of entrepreneur/patron relations upon group agendas is of crucial importance, if we are concerned with what interests are truly represented by particular groups and in assessing the scope and bias of the organized interest universe. Even in a membership group, resources from patrons afford the opportunity of freeing staff from dependence upon members, potentially affecting group priorities. While it has been argued that the existence of group patrons has had a positive effect upon the group universe by contributing to the countervailing power of public interest groups (McFarland 1992), it has also been argued that patrons have contributed to a narrowing of interests in national politics by channeling funds to "professional" rather than "activist" organizations (Jenkins 1985; Jenkins and Eckert 1986). Some empirical evidence exists to suggest that group strategies and influence techniques are affected by outside patronage (King and Walker 1992). The growth of patronage may have contributed **both** to a proliferation of interests active in the policy process and unease about how really representative the organized interest universe has become. We need to know much more.

I should also note that our knowledge of the group actors themselves is pretty limited, and we lack even basic, systematic background studies of those individuals involved in group mobilization and maintenance. The role played by "institutional personalities," such as Ralph Nader, Jeremy Rifkin of the Foundation on Economic Trends, or Arthur Simon of Bread for the World, remains to be explored systematically by scholars. With the exception of Wilson's (1973) general discussion of "organizing cadres" in the public interest sector, and Berry's (1977) survey of entrepreneurs in the same sector, there is no recent survey of group entrepreneurs, their backgrounds, and recruitment. Even less is known about the individuals representing the patronage entities, be they foundations, corporations, or government agencies.

None of my comments should be taken to mean that we should abandon our further investigation of member/group relations. Even in this area, our research scope should be broadened. As Jane Mansbridge (1992) has suggested, if we want to know how group preferences are formed and modified, it is essential that we examine the internal group deliberation process, including the exchange of information and perceptions among members and leaders. Interests are seldom given. While there are some notable exceptions (McFarland 1984; Rothenberg 1988, 1992; Johnson 1987, 1990), internal group politics are rarely studied in any depth.

Another area which, at first glance, looks like it has attracted broad scholarly attention involves the role of organized interests in party and electoral matters. There is plenty of available research dealing with the PAC giving and spending patterns in elections (although generalization from this literature is difficult and the research agenda even here is far from complete). But anyone who examines a text on parties or interest groups has to be struck with how little recent research exists dealing with interest group/party

relations. For example, there are no recent studies comparable in their depth to Greenstone's (1969) or Eldersveld's (1964) analyses of organized labor's role in elections and the Democratic Party.

Changing professional interests within the discipline are probably the major reason for the lack of recent organized interest/party studies. The older generation of interest group scholars also had a strong research interest in parties, unlike the new generation of interest group researchers, whose specialty fields are more likely to be Congress, policy, or public choice. Even those who study PACs are more likely to be electoral behavior scholars, rather than researchers who start from an interest group perspective. Departments of political science tend to be filled with narrow specialists--one is either a party specialist or an interest group specialist. The growth of the literature in both fields is so vast that it has become difficult to be research-competent in both areas.

Serious conceptual problems await those who wish to study contemporary party/interest group matters. Such relationships are difficult to disentangle in a world in which "organized interests" replace "interest groups" (often the group in question is an ad hoc, loosely knit entity of single issue activists), and what constitutes the "political party" is not very clear either (many believe today's party is best thought of as composed of its Senate campaign committee, its House campaign committee, its national committee, and the respective state party organizations). It could even be argued that contemporary national parties look (and to a degree are defined by law) as special interest groups of their own, whose major purpose is less to mobilize voters and aggregate interests, and more to raise campaign resources for their office holders seeking reelection ("incumbent safety" organizations). An electoral system based largely upon the ability of parties and their candidates to raise and rely upon financial resources from "special" interests inevitably clashes with the notion that parties are aggregators of broad interests, potential counterweights to the excessive demands of organized interests. At a minimum, much of what has become conventional wisdom in the profession about the relationship between the two types of mediating institutions is in need of reinvestigation, and probably revision.

The organized interest/party research agenda is potentially very broad. The activist farmers, teachers, and members of organized labor, who in the 1970s and 1980s played such important roles in the presidential nomination races in states like Iowa and New Hampshire, have yet to be studied from the perspective of group strategy, nor has the role of organized interests in the platform-writing process. What are the implications of the relations among the K Street lobby and Washington law firms and the two major parties, or the relations among Washington policy institutes and think tanks and party politics (for example, the role played by the Heritage Foundation in the Republican Party and the Reagan and Bush White Houses, or the Progressive

Policy Institute's impact upon Democratic Party decision-making)? We talk far too much about parties and organized interests as separate entities, often in competition. I suspect that research would reveal the relationship is much more symbiotic and collaborative, probably more so than most of us believe is healthy. Much work needs to be done here and none of it is likely to be easy.

Conclusion

Let me conclude by noting that the research agenda for those who study organized interests has always been diverse and is likely to remain so. While there may be some agreement about research gaps and understudied areas, we will still disagree over research priorities. Research is likely to continue to be ad hoc, scholars studying what interests them, constrained by limited resources. There are no magical new hard data sets on the horizon. As a consequence, I suspect our knowledge of representative issues dealing with organized interests will always be fragmentary, and scholarship will continue to lag rather than anticipate changes in the primary trends of national politics. It may simply be the nature of the beast.

References

- Arnold, R. Douglas. 1982. "Overtilled and Undertilled Fields in American Politics." *Political Science Quarterly* 97:213-20.
- Barber, James David. 1965. *The Lawmakers*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Berry, Jeffrey. 1977. *Lobbying for the People*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cigler, Allan J. 1991. "Interest Groups: A Subfield in Search of Identity." In William Crotty, ed., *Political Science: Looking to the Future*. Vol. IV. Pp. 99-135. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Eldersveld, Samuel J. 1964. *Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Greenstone, David J. 1969. *Labor in American Politics*. New York: Knopf.
- Jenkins, Craig. 1985. *The Politics of Insurgency*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Jenkins, Craig, and Craig M. Eckert. 1986. "Channeling Black Insurgency: Elite Patronage and Professional Social Movement Organizations in the Development of the Black Movement." *American Sociological Review* 79:79-96.
- Johnson, Paul E. 1987. "Foresight and Myopia in Organizational Membership." *Journal of Politics* 49:678-703.
- _____. 1990. "The Unraveling Problem." In Melvin Dubnick and Alan Gitelson, eds., *Public Policy and Economic Institutions*. Pp. 351-88. Greenwood, CT: JAI Press.
- King, David C., and Jack L. Walker. 1992. "The Provision of Benefits by Interest Groups in the United States." *Journal of Politics* 34:394-426.
- Mansbridge, Jane J. 1992. "A Deliberative Theory of Interest Representation." In Mark P. Petracca, ed., *The Politics of Interests*. Pp. 32-57. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- McFarland, Andrew S. 1984. *Common Cause*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.

- _____. 1992. "Interest Groups and the Policymaking Process: Sources of Countervailing Power in American." In Mark P. Petracca, ed., *The Politics of Interests*. Pp. 58-79. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Mitchell, William C., and Michael C. Munger. 1991. "Economic Models of Interest Groups: An Introductory Survey." *American Journal of Political Science* 35:512-546.
- Milbraith, Lester W. 1963. *The Washington Lobbyists*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 1992. *The Third House*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Rothenberg, Lawrence S. 1988. "Choosing among Public Interest Groups: Membership, Activism and Retention in Political Organizations." *American Political Science Review* 82:1129-52.
- _____. 1992. *Linking Citizens to Government*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Salisbury, Robert H. 1969. "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups." *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 13:1-32.
- _____. 1984. "Interest Representation: The Dominance of Institutions." *American Political Science Review* 78:64-76.
- _____. 1986. "Washington Lobbyists: A Collective Portrait." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdette A. Loomis, eds., *Interest Group Politics*. 2d ed. Pp. 146-161. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Schlesinger, Joseph A. 1965. *Ambition and Politics*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, and John T. Tierney. 1986. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Walker, Jack L. 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups." *American Political Science Review* 77:390-406.
- Wilson, James Q. 1973. *Political Organizations*. New York: Basic Books.

Interest Group Research: Questions and Approaches

John Tierney

Were it not for the checks and balances inherent to the workshop format, I would balk at presuming to address the question of where future interest group research should be directed, and how it might best be approached. On one level, as I'll reveal, I have my own preferences and biases on the matter, which I'm happy to elaborate to anyone willing to indulge me. But on another level, my honest view of the matter is that scholars should only care that the questions and approaches they pursue are valid, not how interesting they are to others. People only produce good research and writing when they explore questions they personally find engaging and use methods they find productive. And in any case, the whole question of what is intellectually interesting is quite (if not absolutely) subjective. Although some scholars may not to be very interested in, say, the litigious activities and courtroom strategies of organized interests, others find the subject utterly fascinating. There are, as George Bush (or Peggy Noonan) might put it, a "thousand points of light" on this particular research landscape, and people should follow their own lights.

Having said that, however, I shall identify the areas of research and the kinds of questions that I would find interesting to explore, if I had sufficient wit, opportunity, academic acumen, and financial resources. And I also shall spell out the implications of such an agenda for research strategies--at least for my own research.

I should start by noting that my own preference would be to have more research focusing on various aspects of interest articulation (and the impacts of it), rather than on questions lumped under the rubric of "demand aggregation," the latter having now become a well-worked if not necessarily over-tilled field. Because of the efforts of various scholars in recent years--Jack Walker (1991), Robert Salisbury et al. (1987, 1993), William P. Browne (1988), Kay Schlozman and John Tierney (1986), and others--we now have added empirical data to the theoretical speculations about various aspects of demand aggregation: the reasons for (and timing of) interest group

proliferation; the motivations for interest group membership and the problems groups face in attracting and retaining members; and the changing contours in the scope and bias of the pressure group community. And ongoing research by Kay Schlozman and her collaborators on citizen participation (see her paper for this workshop) promises to reveal still more about who joins what kinds of organizations.

While our collective intellectual curiosity thus is leading to new understanding of who joins organizations and for what reasons, we haven't made the same advances in paying attention to processes of internal organizational decision-making. Two particular lines of inquiry intrigue me. First, how do organizations go about deciding what their interests are, and what policy goals should be pursued? In view of the centrality of this question to political science, it is striking that it has received relatively little attention. It gets at an axis of questions having to do with organizations' internal democracy, communications, staff control, "education" of members, and need to "show off" to certain constituencies in order to maintain their purposive allegiance--all especially problematic and interesting in organizations that have large, heterogeneous memberships encompassing widely divergent preferences.

The second question is, at least in my view, just as interesting, and equally surprising in terms of how little attention it receives: how do organizations decide what strategies and tactics to use in pursuit of public policy objectives? Thomas Gais and Jack Walker (Walker 1991) are among the few who have addressed this question pointedly. And, as they showed, the choices for any particular group will be dictated to a certain extent by factors, such as the degree of political conflict in its political environments, the group's organizational resources, the character of its memberships, and the principal sources of its financial support. Gais and Walker were homing in on a key set of questions, and more work should be done in this area. After all, even accounting for multiple constraints, the lobbyists and others in the organization who choose tactics--*what to do* in any situation--still have a fair amount of discretion. Yet we know remarkably little about how they exercise it and according to what sorts of decision rules, cues, or hunches. Why play the grassroots card in one case but not in a similar one? Why enter into this coalition but not that one? When do we litigate, and when do we schmooze instead?

It's true that delving into those decision-making processes would be a challenging intellectual venture, given the almost infinite permutations of actors and situations. But such obstacles haven't prevented political scientists from exploring the processes by which legislators, executive officials, judges, party activists, or voters make choices, and the varied influences that guide them. I don't see why we can't spend more time asking the same kinds of questions of organized interests. Of course, doing so will require that some of us spend much more time and effort doing surveys as well as doing case

studies of individual organizations and even individual interest representatives. (More on this latter point later.)

In addition to wanting to know more about how organized interests *decide* what to do, I'd like to see more research that fills gaps in our understanding of *what* they do. In terms of our fix on the big picture, we have somewhat better data than we had fifteen years ago, thanks both to several large surveys of recent years (Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Walker 1991; Salisbury et al. 1987) as well as detailed examinations of particular kinds of political activities, such as direct marketing to raise money, recruit new members, lobby public officials, and publicize issues (Godwin 1988). But by and large, the work in this area is highly fragmentary, and our knowledge has lots of gaps waiting to be filled.

Researchers have devoted lots of attention to the role of organized interests in electoral politics (especially via PAC contributions) and, to a lesser extent, in legislative politics and policy-making (through direct lobbying, grassroots campaigns, and the like). But our handle on what goes on in the arena of executive agencies (and between agencies and top levels of the executive branch¹) is appallingly weak, despite the crucial importance of what happens there for the overall policy process. To the extent that political scientists have explored the links between agencies and organized interests, the focus has been dominated over time (somewhat surprisingly, I think, in terms of its relative unimportance) by research on the forces generated by the "revolving door," or the exchange of personnel between executive agencies and particular industries.

With the exception of a few outstanding studies of interest group and agency interactions in particular policy areas--one thinks immediately of all we learned from Jeff Berry's *Feeding Hungry People* (1984)--we have very little research that explores the many two-way streets and mutual-aid arrangements linking interest representatives with political executives, program heads, and others in the bureaucracy. More of this sort of work is needed if we are to understand the complex and subtle ways in which organized interests operate in executive branch settings. Such work would have dual benefits, illuminating not only an important arena of interest group politics but also the larger politics of executive policy processes.

Just as there are particular institutional settings, such as executive agencies, in which our research on organized interest activity is in especially short supply, there are also imbalances in our attention to the role of organized interests in different policy areas. There are some areas, such as agricultural policy, where we are fortunate to have an assortment of thoughtful studies--by McConnell (1966), Browne (1988), Cigler (1986), Hansen (1991), and others--of farm group politics over time and in a variety of political and institutional settings, giving us an extraordinary handle on the dynamics of agricultural politics. While few other policy areas have attracted a similar concentration of scholarly attention, we nevertheless have

a growing accumulation of work that tells us a lot about organized interests across various policy and issue areas, such as women's rights (Costain 1991; Gelb and Palley 1982), health care (Tierney 1987; Laumann and Knoke 1987), water resource management (McCool 1989), trucking deregulation (Robyn 1987), and chemical pesticide policy (Bosso 1987).

But some important policy areas have received surprising little attention and are in need of much more study. The dearth of attention from interest group scholars is perhaps most glaring in the realm of foreign and defense policy. This is surprising both because of this policy area's centrality to the government and the economy, and because of the broad mix of political scientists generally attentive to this policy area. In any case (and for whatever reasons), there are many interesting research questions that deserve notice here. For example, we have an opportunity right now to study the ways in which the role of organized interests in a particular policy area not only affects policy outcomes, but is *affected by* the larger political and institutional settings. Changing political conditions around the world have undermined many of the old policy rationales supporting long-standing distributions of foreign aid, thus changing the prospects in Washington as well as of countries (and their hyphenated-American patrons) that benefit from that aid. Changing fiscal conditions in the United States also have had obviously significant impacts, lending a zero-sum character to the politics of both foreign aid and defense budgeting, pitting various claimants against each other in the struggle for dollars and making the political conflict in those issue areas more bitter and strident than it has been for a long time. Finally, changes in defense spending have brought into the increasingly vicious fray at the domestic pork barrel a passel of communities and firms that once prospered from military bases or weapons production and now are wanting. Such developments hold all sorts of interesting questions for interest group scholars to explore.

Another tangential line of inquiry has to do with the increasing presence in Washington of foreign governments and businesses lobbying on behalf of their own interests or hiring American lobbyists--often former Members of Congress or former trade officials--to do it for them. In the view of many observers, the most disturbing specter of foreign political power has Japanese features. Critics of the "Japan lobby" assert that Japanese companies (and the Japanese government) spend tens of millions of dollars each year on Washington lobbyists, consultants, and public relations firms, infiltrating Washington's fragmented decision-making apparatus to such an extent that the Japanese hold considerable sway, especially over American trade policy (Choate 1990). Defenders of Japan's involvement in Washington politics argue that the case against the Japan lobby is vastly overstated, because Japanese lobbying is not much different from other kinds of interest representation in Washington, with competing interests often canceling each other out and having only marginal impact on policy--and that, in fact, much

of the Japanese lobbying has been counter-productive because of the negative publicity it has generated.

While there may be disagreement about the importance of foreign lobbying efforts in Washington, it is certainly the case that the Japanese and others have established in Washington vast and formidable networks of highly regarded American advocates who have the kinds of skills, insider knowledge, strategically placed contacts, and far-reaching financial resources that typically spell access and influence in American politics. So far the journalistic literature on this development has eclipsed anything done by political scientists (at least to my knowledge). That imbalance should be rectified, in part so that the particular perspectives and concerns of our discipline might be trained on the subject.

Notes on Research Strategies

Like any of the other panelists for this workshop, I could go on and on with a listing of the kinds of questions I would like to see interest group research address. Instead, I would like to make some observations about the implications of what I have said above for the kinds of "research strategies" I think are most productive and useful in this subfield. (I put the term in quotes because I recognize that to some colleagues the sort of work I am about to describe hardly befits that dignified term.) These comments draw on my own research experience and preferences and are not meant to be a judgment of the appropriateness or value of other approaches.

Like the others at this workshop, I have done lots of different kinds of research on organized interests (although I can't be accused of ever even bordering on formal deductive theory-building). Perhaps my most ambitious project was that undertaken with Kay Schlozman, resulting in our book *Organized Interests and American Democracy* (1986), for which we assembled several new data sets: a categorization of the nearly 7,000 organizations listed in the *Washington Representatives* (1981 directory) as having a presence in Washington politics either by maintaining an office there or by hiring counsel or consultants to represent them; a similar organizational census of the nearly 3,000 political action committees listed in the *PAC Directory* as having been registered with the Federal Elections Commission as of the end of 1980; and our Washington Representatives Survey, a set of structured interviews with government affairs representatives in an "activity-weighted" sample of 175 organized interests having offices in Washington. (Those interested in the complex issues involved in designing such a sample and an elaboration of the procedure itself may want to consult the appendix to that book).

My own experience with that project--and my exposure through the literature to other large-scale studies of organized interests, such as those of Jack Walker, and Bob Salisbury and his colleagues--convinces me that this

sort of work is very useful in mapping out the forests and in helping to answer macro-level questions about political behavior in the interest group world. But when I reflect on which of my own research efforts have taught me the most about interest group politics (and how that dimension intersects with other realms of politics), my answer lies far from statistics, organizational categorizations, and even hundreds of structured interviews. Instead, my own "personal bests" in research (such as they are) have been of several other types, all of them quite separate from the world of large-scale surveys.

First, I have learned a lot from having a series of lengthy, unstructured interviews with a handful of experienced lobbyists and interest group officers. In some cases, I have spent many hours, totaling a number of days, with these people, and in the course of our rambling conversations have acquired most of whatever subtleties there are to my understanding of group politics. Second, most of my contacts of this sort have occurred in the context of detailed studies of particular policy areas (postal affairs, health care, and public lands) and of particular organizations, not in the context of research focused on interest groups, per se. Finally, much of what I have learned about organized interests (especially about their behavior and impact) has come from interviewing people in other organizational and institutional settings--legislators and their staffers, political executives, and program administrators and their aides.

From these experiences, I draw (for myself, if not for others) a few conclusions which I offer with the tentativeness and modesty they deserve. First, I believe we need much more "soaking and poking" in the interest group field. While large-scale surveys and the like definitely have their place, we could learn a lot more if more of us would spend more time "hanging around" the organizations that represent interests. (I can't improve on the rationale for and methodological defense of participant observation offered by Richard Fenno, the premiere soaker-and-poker, in his appendix to *Home Style*.) Some of this may even take the form of seeking employment in such organizations in order to observe their behavior as a genuine insider. But that is not principally (or even ideally) what I have in mind. Rather, and more simply, I believe more of us need to devote effort to studying particular organizations in great detail. It's surprising how little such research there is in our field, extending not very far beyond the handful of good books we know well, such as McConnell (1966) and McFarland (1984). We learn a lot from such works, not only about the specific organization, but typically about many other aspects of political life.

Extending this argument to its next level, I also would push for studies focusing on particular lobbyists and/or organization executives. Again, in view of the frequency with which our colleagues in the discipline offer analyses of individuals in Congress, the White House, or the courts, it's surprising that interest group scholars have eschewed this sort of focus. It's surprising also in view of what we could learn from such studies about organizational

entrepreneurship, for example, or about lobbying techniques. What has been done along these lines is the work of journalists, such as Elizabeth Drew (1983). I see no reason to cede this territory to reporters.

Although there are a number of practical obstacles to such research (whether devoted to particular organizations or to individuals), I think they can be overcome just as they are in other settings, where the egos of those who would be studied go a long way toward subjugating whatever concerns they may have about privacy, confidentiality, and the like. There is also the obvious problem that there is no a priori reason for studying any one (or some), rather than another (or others), no intrinsic reason to believe that any particular organization (or individual) is either important enough or typical enough to support theory beyond the confines of the individual case study and the ad hoc explanations derived from it. To that, I would say one has to start somewhere, and our chances of improving on group theory increase with the aggregation of careful and instructive cases.

I also would like to see more interest group scholars train their sights on particular policy areas and the politics thereof. It seems to me that, paradoxically, we learn more about the impacts of organized interests on public policy by studying policy processes in all their complexity, rather than by focusing narrowly on what organized interests do. Research on the politics of public policy enables us to study organized interests in the context of their interactions with other elements of the political system, as they work to craft policies they prefer. This sort of research also holds the greatest potential for enhancing our understanding of the dynamism of group activities and fortunes--how and why they change over time, across institutional settings, and across policy areas.

Part of the virtue of this sort of policy research is that it forces the investigator to keep an eye simultaneously on developments across a variety of fronts--in government institutions, in public opinion, in the economy, and in society generally. Not only is that healthy in terms of giving us a better sense of the whole picture, but it sensitizes us to the ways in which the politics of organized interests is bi-directional, with groups not only affecting other institutions and actors, but being affected by the larger political and institutional settings and changes in them. A good example of recent work on interest groups that is enriched by that sort of sensitivity is the new book by Mark Hansen (1991) on the farm lobby. As Hansen shows, the American Farm Bureau's longstanding access to and competitive advantage with lawmakers eroded in the 1950s and 1960s, as alternative sources of information and advice emerged, as rapid migration away from farms diminished agrarian voting strength in Congress, while urban legislators, pushed by consumer advocates, staked out more aggressive positions on American agricultural policy.

In short, good research on organized interests and their public policy impacts requires scholars to be students of history, economics, political and

economic geography, and institutional change. This is no small order, but the payoffs will be great.

Finally, I believe we are at a point where we might benefit from having more normative analyses of organized interest politics--more effort to sort through what is healthy and what is not about current interest group politics in this country. Here again, journalists certainly have been doing a lot of this recently, and again, I hate to see us leave the discourse to them. This normative analysis could occur not only at the broadest level--is contemporary interest group politics salutary for democracy?--but also at a more practical, or pragmatic level, addressing ongoing debates. One example is the growing controversy I cited earlier over the interest representation activities of foreign governments and foreign corporations, especially their hiring of large numbers of former officials of the United States government to lobby on their behalf. Many thoughtful observers believe that it is wrong to permit former top-level American officials, who gained their inside knowledge of policy processes at the taxpayers' expense and who have unparalleled access to decision-makers, to represent foreign governments and corporations in the halls of Congress. To put this now familiar argument in its baldest terms: if governments or businesses from Japan or Pakistan, for example, want to lobby the United States Congress, perhaps their agents should be their own, not someone with the familiar face and insider knowledge of a Carla Hills or Elliott Richardson.

Political scientists ought to weigh in on such matters. This will mean that some of us will have to suspend our scholarly objectivity--our built-in "on the one hand, on the other hand" tendencies--and set forth some arguments. Our current disinclination or unwillingness to engage in the sorts of spirited normative debates that historically have animated analysis of factions robs us of a lot of the fun we could be having with our work in this field.

Notes

1. Consider, for example, the role played by organized interests in securing the intervention of Vice President Quayle's Competitiveness Council in the Environmental Protection Agency's implementation of the new Clean Air Act Amendments.

References

- Berry, Jeffrey M. 1984. *Feeding Hungry People: Rulemaking in the Food Stamp Program*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Bosso, Christopher J. 1987. *Pesticides and Politics: The Life Cycle of a Public Issue*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Browne, William P. 1988. *Private Interests, Public Policy, and American Agriculture*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Choate, Pat. 1990. *Agents of Influence*. New York: Knopf.

- Cigler, Allan J. 1986. "From Protest Group to Interest Group: The Making of American Agricultural Movement, Inc." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds. *Interest Group Politics*, 2nd ed. Pp. 46-69. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Costain, Anne N. 1991. "Social Movements as Interest Groups: The Case of the Women's Movement." In Mark P. Petracca, ed. *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*. Pp. 285-307. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Drew, Elizabeth. 1983. "Charlie: A Portrait of a Lobbyist." In Allan J. Cigler and Burdett A. Loomis, eds. *Interest Group Politics*. Pp. 217-250. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1978. *Home Style*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Gelb, Joyce, and Marian Lief Palley. 1982. *Women and Public Policies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Godwin, R. Kenneth. 1988. *One Billion Dollars of Influence*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1991. *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby, 1919-1981*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Heinz, John P., and Robert H. Salisbury. 1993. *The Hollow Core*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Laumann, Edward O., and David Knoke. 1987. *The Organization State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- McConnell, Grant. 1966. *Private Power and American Democracy*. New York: Knopf.
- McCool, Daniel. 1989. *Command of the Waters*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- McFarland, Andrew S. 1984. *Common Cause*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- Robyn, Dorothy. 1987. *Braking the Special Interests: Trucking Deregulation and the Politics of Policy Reform*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Salisbury, Robert H., John P. Heinz, Edward O. Laumann, and Robert L. Nelson. 1987. "Who Works With Whom? Interest Group Alliances and Opposition." *American Political Science Review* 81:1217-34.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, and John T. Tierney. 1986. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Tierney, John T. 1987. "Organized Interests in Health Politics and Policymaking." *Medical Care Review* 44:89-118.
- Walker, Jack L. 1991. *Mobilizing Interest Groups in America*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Interviewing Interest Group Personnel: The Little Village in the World

Andrew S. McFarland

As the author of three books largely based on interviewing interest group personnel, perhaps there is some knowledge I have to share with younger political scientists. *Public Interest Lobbies: Decision Making on Energy* (1976), *Common Cause* (1984), and *Cooperative Pluralism* rest on an aggregate of 160 formal interviews (scheduled with appointments) I conducted myself, not to speak of hundreds of informal conversations I conducted in the process of observation. I hired no assistants to do this work; I did it myself, and thus got a lot of experience in interviewing lobbyists, members of lobbying organizations, and some of the targets of lobbying.

This short paper cannot be a methodological or epistemological treatise. To me interviewing is a craft; one that is taught to a graduate student by a mentor. Consequently, I must confess I have read practically nothing about the methodology of interviewing, although indirectly I have been influenced by the ideas of Lewis Anthony Dexter (1970) on this topic, because he influenced Aaron Wildavsky, who was the one who demonstrated this craft to me.¹

However, the first-time interviewer may lack a mentor on the craft of interviewing or may want to gain additional perspectives on this topic. In this case, one should read "The Open-Ended, Semistructured Interview: An (Almost) Operational Guide" by Dean Hammer and Aaron Wildavsky (1989) for a general treatment of the open-ended interview. This paper applies the perspective of Hammer and Wildavsky to the situation of the young scholar, who plans to interview interest group personnel.

Perhaps the best aspect of the "behavioral revolution" of the 1950s in political science was that it encouraged a sense of the importance of the scholar personally observing politics, and interviewing these participants in politics. Persons who did this, such as graduate students at Yale who participated in Dahl's *Who Governs?* study (1961), took pride in the inconveniences endured, and the effort exerted to go out and watch politics in action, while getting participants to talk about their motivations, goals, and

strategies. Young political scientists studying at Yale, such as Aaron Wildavsky and Nelson Polsby, did not think it was always necessary to ask repeatedly the same questions from an interview schedule to get statistical correlations or even percentage tables. In this, some of their friends studying Congress agreed (e.g. Richard Fenno and Lewis Anthony Dexter).

Thus, directly from Wildavsky, and indirectly from others in this group, I got the idea of the interviewer as anthropologist, studying one of the numerous "little villages" of American politics. And the most important *modus operandi* of such interviewing is to get the "inhabitants" of the little village to talk freely. After several dozen such interviews, the "anthropologist" should be able to chart the customs and the social organization of the group being studied. It is preferable that the scholar not only conduct interviews, but also spend many hours "hanging around," unobtrusively observing a social system in action.

Thirty years ago, the significance of such "field study" of politics was confirmed by its comparison to a supposed contrasting ignorance of power-elite theorists, journalists, or ill-informed political reformers who had made all sorts of generalizations and normative reform proposals without taking the trouble to observe the "little village" themselves (Polsby 1963a). The work of the political science students "in the field" was regarded as theoretically significant, as straightforward generalization without elaborate mathematics or argumentation, and sufficient to refute (at least to some) the conjectures and distorted anecdotalism of less careful observers.

In his first 15 years of teaching, at least, Aaron Wildavsky, a member of the school just discussed, pushed his graduate students to do some interviewing themselves. In most cases, the graduate student would participate in a research project with Wildavsky acting as mentor. The student was instructed how to interview; he/she was also able to watch Wildavsky do it. It is no secret that Wildavsky has strong opinions, but he was disciplined by the norms of the behavioral revolution, a very real event to him, so he gave great stress to listening to the interviewee reconstruct his perspective on the world. Accordingly, he was able to write *The Politics of the Budgetary Process* (1964), an application of the incrementalist theories of Charles E. Lindblom in "The Science of 'Muddling Through'" (Lindblom 1959) by using the methods of Fenno (1966).

But due to the current nature of the political science profession, scholars without tenure had best be cautious about attempting to publish material solely based on interviews, describing and interpreting behavior in some "little village," without interview data in tabular form related to the testing of hypotheses. The non-tenured scholar, interested in the interpretation of politics in some corner of the political world, is best advised to report non-statistical interpretations along with statistically analyzed data. But there is an element of balance--a well-done report of a field study of a "little village"

may be widely read and well-remembered. A description and interpretation, informed by political science training, of such groups as Greenpeace, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or a group of Ross Perot activists would likely receive a wide professional reading.

Scheduling Appointments: The Bane of Interviewing

In my opinion, scheduling appointments is the worst part of interviewing, while the actual process of conducting the interview is usually fun. An advantage to the "little village" approach to interviewing is that most of your respondents are concentrated in one place, such as in the headquarters of Common Cause, or are delegates attending a political convention, a Wildavsky favorite. This aspect of concentration of respondents obviously makes it easier to schedule appointments and meet with them. More difficult is interviewing in which several dozen subjects are located in different organizations and different places; much more elaborate introductions are needed, as well as more work to persuade them to be interviewed, because each does not know who you are.

Even more difficult is interviewing which requires travel to several places. Here the young scholar should use common sense. If several locations are close together, as in doing interviewing in four cities in Wisconsin, the project may be practical (Woliver 1993). But the young scholar cannot do a geographically dispersed study on a scale larger than this without hiring assistants.

In getting access, again the "little village" study is easier. The political scientist can probably find some person working in the interest group who is sympathetic to the idea of a study. The scholar interviews this person first, and then tries to get this first respondent to help schedule appointments with others, for instance, by personally introducing the scholar to other members of the organization.

A different situation occurs when the scholar is a volunteer for the group or has otherwise shown sympathy towards it and is consequently already known to its members. In this case, there is less problem in arranging interviews, but the scholar may have difficulty in making a relatively unbiased scholarly report.

Younger scholars may be in a position to travel to several places in the country and "crash" with friends, while they set up appointments to interview personnel in some local interest group or political organization. Another gambit is that while traveling for some other purpose, it may be possible to schedule interviews with local interest group activists, although it is necessary to call ahead a week or 10 days to get an appointment. In this way, I interviewed local Common Cause activists in California, Arizona, and

Massachusetts. But a national organization like Common Cause has regular governing board meetings, and perhaps an annual convention, and this is the best way to get a sense of the views of local activists. (There may be antagonism between local activists and national leaders, which is not readily expressed in formal settings, however. Often it is possible to learn more about such tensions in committee meetings, or hanging about in convention lounges or in the bar).

In my opinion, it is best to approach a stranger in a new setting first with a letter requesting an interview, and then with follow-up phone calls to make an appointment. The scholar has a low priority on a busy schedule, and it is too easy not to take a phone call, or to state politely over the phone that they are too busy. A letter should be written on the stationery of some impressive institution, such as a university or a research institute. I would include some brief, innocuous statement about the purpose of the study. In addition, a vita should be included to demonstrate scholarly credentials. At the end of the letter, I stated that I would phone in a few days to try to arrange an interview. It is hopeful that they will call you first, and this will often occur. Having a telephone that is answered during business hours is thus a necessity, although an answering machine will suffice.

The scholar must be prepared for rescheduling of the interview time, perhaps more than once. Unfortunately, the scholar is last on the interviewee's list of priorities. About half the time, something else will come up, and the interview must be postponed. Further, respondents involved in political battles lead inherently unpredictable lives, as unexpected political emergencies are frequent (Redman 1973). The scholar should not interpret even multiple rescheduling as an attempt to evade the interview. Here persistence and a bit of aggressiveness are necessary to get the interview, and it is for this reason that it is necessary to be in the same city for two weeks to be relatively sure of getting an interview.

There is one way of combining study techniques to get an interview. Most interest groups have on hand useful introductory literature about their organization and activities. In Washington, I liked to call an interest group about the availability of such materials, and then pick them up in person, as an excuse to visit the headquarters. Indeed, the very appearance of the office is part of the data of an interest group study--is it formal and plush, is it located in cramped quarters in a low-rent building, who do the employees and volunteers appear to be, and so forth. A pick-up of a group's materials can provide an excuse for a conversation with someone about the scholarly study, and hence lead to the scheduling of an interview.

The "little village" school of interviewing, into which I was inducted by Wildavsky, tends to avoid interviews over the telephone, although this may have been a somewhat arbitrary result of the stress on personal observation in the late 1950s. Somehow I greatly prefer to interview face-to-face, but this

is not always possible, even if the subjects are concentrated in some place. Of the 160 scheduled interviews I conducted, about 10% were conducted over the phone and were scheduled in the sense that I may have written a letter explaining the reason for my call, and had to arrange a time to talk with the respondent. I know one political scientist who has the will-power to call dozens of interest groups to get the data on an entire universe of groups in a policy area, but very few persons are either motivated or forceful enough to do this. Telephone interviewing is especially necessary if one is doing some type of panel interviewing, or just informally checking back with someone to get their views on developing events. This is particularly necessary in repeated interviews with Washingtonians; either the scholar cannot get back to Washington, or some subjects leave the capital to return to their home states.

Intruding upon someone and persuading them to give an interview is a bit aggressive for some scholars, but, by the same coin, it may be a good developmental experience for those of a shy nature. Remember, most persons really enjoy being interviewed, once the interview begins. It makes them feel important! I always tried to encourage this feeling on the part of the interviewee through complimenting them and expressing a deep interest in their activities, whatever they were. And actually, I was really interested and often impressed by my subjects and their responses.

The work of scheduling appointments is emotionally difficult for most scholars, as their requests get delayed responses or even get turned down. Interviewing is more fun when it is done as part of a team or research project, when others are suffering similar blows to the ego, and a shared humorous attitude can alleviate the irritation and boredom. Also helpful is social support when a number of young scholars at a research institute are working on different interview projects at the same time, as has been the case for 30 years in the well-known "bullpen" of the Governmental Studies floor of The Brookings Institution.

Conduct of the Interview

First, what is it that is asked? If asking a group a set of questions to get tables of data, notes must be taken in a certain way. But if the biggest concern is getting the informants to describe the "little village" constituting some organization, a few general questions may suffice, and some may prefer not to take many notes during the interview. My own interviewing was of the second type. I asked only a few lead questions, trying to get the respondent to talk freely, although sometimes I would ask follow-up questions to get the respondent to elaborate on points of special concern to me.

My scheduled interviews at Common Cause were based on just one question: "What do you do for Common Cause?" or some variant, such as

"What is your job here at Common Cause?" In interviewing at seven public interest groups concerning their energy positions, I just asked them to tell me about their energy stands and how they decided them. Here, I would be especially interested in following up by getting a picture of how a group's membership or some constituency affected its decision making on energy positions. In interviewing participants in the National Coal Policy Project, I did prepare several questions beforehand, because I was more interested in their personal reaction to participation in this series of meetings to reconcile conflict among public interest groups and coal-related businesses. That is to say, if interviewing is directed towards the description of an organization, one can rely on piecing together quite a number of accounts, and the individual interviews can be less structured. On the other hand, if the interviewing is directed towards the views or opinions of individuals, then the interview must be more structured, because only one person has data about their own opinions.

Interviewers disagree about the value of using a tape recorder. This device can be of great value, but does it tend to force some respondents to conceal their real ideas for fear of embarrassment or retribution? Does a tape recorder interfere with rapport in the interviewing situation by constantly reminding the respondent that this is not a conversation, but an interview? Those who use tape recorders generally observe that interviewees generally forget about the recorder after a few minutes.

I never used a tape recorder, because my general technique is to make the interview seem like an enjoyable conversation. Then the question becomes: does an interviewer try to take detailed notes during the course of the interview itself? I was taught not to do this, but to transcribe notes immediately after the interview, as even taking detailed notes may force the interviewee to be guarded in his responses. I would, of course, make notes about important details, such as names and dates, although I might not even do this if I judged it would make the respondent nervous.

If extensive notes are not taken, then the interview must immediately be written up from memory. In Washington, this means hailing a cab and rushing back to an office and typewriter or word processor. Those with facility for dictation might dictate a description of the interview into a tape recorder immediately after the interview. Another option might be bringing a lap-top computer and heading for a near-by office.

Even if choosing to take extensive notes, a scholar must write them up immediately after the interview. Extensiveness of notes is a choice which varies with the quality of short term memory for conversations. My memory was very good, and this was one reason I took few notes. Indeed, I sometimes took unnecessary notes to reassure the interviewee that I was paying serious attention to his "lecture!"

Again, there is disagreement between users and non-users of tape recorders. The tape recorder guards against emotional and cognitive biases

in recalling an interview, although it can be argued that the biased scholar is not going to lose his bias just by listening to a tape. Note takers argue that an interviewer does not need a mountain of data in a study, and that tape recorders produce so much data as to interfere with an overall comprehension of a situation or a point of view. Users of tape recorders, on the other hand, argue that a complete transcript reveals tones of voice, hesitancy, and small details that may assume greater importance while listening at leisure.

My impression is that most participants in American politics and public administration, while they may resist allocating time for the interview, enjoy the process of giving an interview once it begins. Interviewees are usually asked to talk about something that is very important to them in a direct way that they usually cannot do on the job, and they usually find this to be very interesting. Interviewees are at the center of attention, especially so if they are not answering some set list of questions but are explaining what the "little village" looks like to them. This interviewer always tries to encourage this sense of self-importance of the interviewee by manifesting an extreme interest in the content of the interview, thereby building up the respondent's "ego" and desire to communicate perceptions. This entails the risk of the respondents over-emphasizing their own importance in the organization, but in the "little village" approach, the perceptions of one interviewee is checked against the reports of several other respondents.

Women interviewers are sometimes in a special situation. The woman scholar may be less directly aggressive, and find it more difficult to get an appointment. But male subjects often especially warm up to female interviewers once the interview begins, although perhaps this runs some risk of distortion from a male trying to impress a female with his own importance. Attractive female scholars must be prepared to shut off an interview and to fend off proposals for dates, something that does occasionally occur.

There is such a thing as an interview that goes too long, especially if the interview is conducted with someone who is not a key member of the organization. Note-takers can handle only so much data, and two hours of a tape recording is usually a case of over-kill. I myself had problems recalling all the important points in an interview which lasted for more than an hour, and preferred the length of about 45 minutes. Two single-spaced typed pages of notes was about the maximum amount of information I wanted.

Interviewing members of public interest groups is easier than interviewing other subjects, because most public interest group personnel are familiar with the idea of social science research, which is a social role they understand. But interviewing more radical movement supporters might sometimes be more difficult, because a movement outlook puts forth the notion that social scientists are immersed in a repressive system, and might actually turn over data to movement enemies.

Quotation of interviewees provides another set of issues. I myself generally prefer not to quote respondents, finding this to be unnecessary in

describing an organization. But in general quotations make a report more readable, especially if selecting colorful answers that make a point, as was the practice of such writers as Fenno (1966), Dexter (Bauer, Pool, and Dexter 1963; Part 4), Polsby (1963b), and Wildavsky (1964). In the majority of cases, social scientists disguise the identity of quoted parties, as there might be a problem with threats of lawsuits if an interviewee takes offense at a quotation. In my third study, I quote some of the interviewees, because a referee felt this was important to the readability of the book. But I would prefer not to do this.

My impression is that most political scientists don't discuss the issue of quotation with a respondent, thereby leaving open the possibility of quotation. Another course of action is to enhance rapport by assuring the respondent will not be quoted, but then the interviewers must stick to their word. Further, just bringing up the issue of quotation can make a respondent more guarded. Of course, there is the option of getting permission from the respondents for the use of any direct quotations in a publication. And to put things in perspective, few members of the general public read the research reports of political scientists.

In my interviewing, I went to some lengths to appear to be knowledgeable about the general area of the interview. I spent a great deal of time being physically present at Common Cause headquarters, and managed to get the reputation of being well-informed about the organization. Accordingly, interviewees felt they had to be somewhat frank with me, in that I was too well-informed to take seriously superficial statements.

To indicate my previous information, I sometimes used organizational or policy-area jargon in follow-up questions, such as "where do you stand on the 560 million level Price-Anderson cap?" (1970s energy policy jargon). But in other situations, I would ask respondents to explain technical matters and strove to give the impression that I am a quick study. ("I don't understand the requirements for filing your budget with state governments under their regulation of charitable organizations. What kind of laws are out there?")

It is probably better to interview important and busy figures last, after becoming well-informed about the organization. At that time, the organizational leader may have the impression also that the interviewer is well-informed, and the elite respondent may thus give the interviewer important information that could come from only this one person. John W. Gardner was about the last person I interviewed at Common Cause; by that time he knew who I was and did not try to slough me off.

Two interviews a day is enough for me, and for most people. Interviewing is surprisingly demanding; it takes a lot of mental energy, including the effort of writing up an interview. This usually took me about 75 minutes for a 45 minute interview. As Aaron Wildavsky once said to me, "Interviewing is hard work!"

Identifying with the Group Being Studied

What if an interviewer becomes friendly with some of the "villagers," even with the "chief?" Is it possible to write an unbiased research report about friends? Much of this issue is dealt with by not referring to specific individuals. References to specific persons with names is journalistic style, but probably is not good social science style. In discussing an interest group, in a few years the names of individuals generally do not matter. Reference to names is, however, necessary to a limited degree if writing a 200-page book about one group, as I did, but such references usually need not be in a context of evaluation. Accordingly, this issue of friendship is mostly a problem of evaluating the work of a head of a group in a publication, because of extensive references to only group leaders.

Another problem is biases resulting from support of the goals of an organization being studied. In my case, I do support the general platform of Common Cause in a context in which political parties get some public funding. Of course this general support enhanced the cooperativeness of Common Cause personnel in giving interviews. But when it came to writing up the work, my bias in favor of the group led to badly written sections in which I evaded issues posed by my bias. I believe that this problem was corrected in the process of writing several drafts over a period of five years, when, of course, I was mostly doing other things.

While most readers consider my research to be favorable to Common Cause in the last analysis, the national organization has never promoted the book in any way, and actually has made a point of never mentioning its existence in its own publications. The national leadership of Common Cause apparently believes that the book does not portray the organization in the way that they want it to be portrayed. While reducing the sales of my book, which conceivably could have been used as a selective benefit for members, this non-recognition indicates that in spite of my Common Cause membership, I at least do not present the bias of the organization itself.

It can be said that the professional norms of social science do have the good effect of reducing researcher bias. In my case, the passage of time in the professional review process and successive redrafts of the manuscript, although frustrating, did enable me to distance myself from the "little village" of Common Cause headquarters on "M" Street.

My general impression is that most political scientists, who identify with the goals of a group they study, do try to distance themselves from the group and are very concerned that professional colleagues will view their research as objective. The effect of professional norms is largely in anticipated reactions, scholars concerned that manuscripts be rejected as biased and striving to anticipate such objections beforehand. Professionally refereed books normally take several years to prepare and redraft, and while to some extent this impedes the diffusion of ideas, it does have the effect of allowing

the interviewer time to distance himself emotionally from the little village, and thereby to write a less biased book.

Conclusion

Interviewing is an important scholarly technique which should not be forgotten in the wake of intellectually impressive modes of data analysis. Interviewing is a craft which is best learned from a mentor, and I have tried to pass along some techniques, most of which I learned from Aaron Wildavsky or from conversations with other interviewers working out of The Brookings Institution.

All successful interviewers have learned one important thing. They cannot completely rely on a single person to get the best picture of some event, policy, or organization. In America today, those who agree to give an interview seldom lie, although they may consciously neglect to tell everything they know. The interviewee does tell the truth as it appears to him/her. But other respondents will provide somewhat different descriptions. The scholar must piece together the various interviews with direct observations and other information, perhaps gathered from documents.

Scholars are all familiar with the idea of multiple perspectives on reality. At first it might appear that the experienced interviewer will become a cynic, not trusting any single account given by anyone. But the interviewer, in comprehending the reasons for the respondents' differing perceptions, has the opportunity to learn a great deal about human motivation.

Notes

1. While I learned interviewing from Aaron Wildavsky, this does not imply that he subscribes to all of the practices mentioned herein. Each who follows a craft has his/her own idiosyncracies.

References

- Bauer, Raymond A., Pool, Ithiel de Sola, and Dexter, Lewis Anthony. 1963. *American Business and Public Policy*. New York: Atherton Press.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1961. *Who Governs?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dexter, Lewis Anthony. 1970. *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1966. *The Power of the Purse: Appropriations Politics in Congress*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Hammer, Dean, and Aaron Wildavsky. 1989. "The Open-Ended, Semistructured Interview: An (Almost) Operational Guide." In *Craftways: On the Organization of Scholarly Work*, Aaron Wildavsky, ed. Pp. 57-101. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

- Lindblom, Charles E. 1959. "The Science of 'Muddling Through'," *Public Administration Review* 19:79-88.
- McFarland, Andrew S. 1976. *Public Interest Lobbies: Decision Making on Energy*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.
- _____. 1984. *Common Cause: Lobbying in the Public Interest*. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House.
- _____. 1993. *Cooperative Pluralism: The Coal National Policy Experiment*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Polsby, Nelson W. 1963a. *Community Power and Political Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____. 1963b. "Two Strategies of Influence: Choosing a Majority Leader, 1962." In *New Perspectives on the House of Representatives*. Robert L. Peabody and Nelson W. Polsby, eds. Pp. 237-70. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co.
- Redman, Eric. 1973. *The Dance of Legislation*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Wildavsky, Aaron. 1964. *The Politics of the Budgetary Process*, first ed. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Woliver, Laura R. 1993. *From Outrage to Action: The Politics of Grass-Roots Dissent*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Reflections on the Study of Interest Groups in the States¹

Virginia Gray

David Lowery

The empirical study of interest groups is mostly conducted at the national level: surveys of Washington lobbyists by Walker (1983), Schlozman and Tierney (1986), and Heinz, Laumann, Salisbury, and Nelson (1990) have taught us an enormous amount about what goes on in the nation's capital. Yet, there are fifty other capitals--in the states--where lobbying also takes place, and about which much less is known. Not until the 1990s did systematic empirical comparisons of state interest groups and lobbying begin to appear (Thomas and Hrebener 1990; Hunter, Wilson, and Brunk 1991; Rosenthal 1992).

We believe great potential exists for exciting empirical work at the state level. And we believe that such research should be guided by the same theoretical core that structures research at the national level. Our own research program attempts to do just that: to construct a system-level theory of state interest groups that is consistent with what we know about micro-level group processes. In this paper, we will first outline the theories that might be used in this endeavor. Then we describe the measures generally used in state politics studies of interest groups. We end with an evaluation of present research and directions for the future.

Theories

Interest group theory can be divided into two categories: *theories of interest groups* and *interest group theories* of politics, with the former being largely micro-level, and the latter being largely macro-level. Thus far, research on interest groups in states has been driven by the macro or system-level theories, rather than the micro-level theories. Among the system level theories, the most use has been made by far of David Truman's (1951) society-centered ideas to explain interest group behavior in the fifty states. One of this approach's central theoretical premises about state interest groups

is that interest group diversity and interest group power are governed by economic complexity. This proposition is derived from Truman's argument (1951:53) that a "complex civilization necessarily develops complex political arrangements. Where the patterns of interaction in a society are intricate, the patterns of political behavior must be also."

Nearly every state analyst since has made the same claim. Zeigler (1983:111), for instance, notes that "The most important aspect of a state's socioeconomic structure concerning interest groups is its level of complexity." He further argues that economic complexity is positively associated with interest group system diversity, and that diversity is negatively related with interest group power. In *Politics, Parties, and Policy*, Sarah Morehouse (1981) empirically links socioeconomic diversity to interest group strength. She finds that single-industry economies are dominated politically by that single interest. In contrast, diversified economies generate competing interests, and hence no single interest dominates these states.

The difficulty in using Truman's concept of economic or socioeconomic complexity is its ambiguity. He only offers several quite general examples, and most of these concern specialization of labor. Morehouse comes closest to an operational definition via her measures of industrialization, social integration, and income distribution. In our work (Gray and Lowery 1991, 1993; Lowery and Gray 1993), we define economic complexity by disaggregating it into economic diversity (the degree to which economic activity is concentrated or dispersed across multiple categories of economic and social activity), wealth (derived from Truman's implicit argument that wealth creates the opportunity for greater specialization, both in the demand for new products and in the capacity to meet those demands), and economic size (larger economies are inherently more complex than small ones).

While Truman's work drives most of our macro-level analyses of interest groups in the states, it is not the only perspective that might be employed. A second macro-level perspective is potentially provided by the "State-centered" view of Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol (1985), which posits that the State is an autonomous actor, rather than the passive umpire in the interest group struggle. The State acts upon interest groups, rather than interest groups pressuring the government. This view also implies that citizen preferences can be changed or at least shaped by governmental action, as opposed to Truman's view that fixed preferences flow out of one's social position (see Clarence Stone 1992, on this point). In the empirical literature on interest groups, Jack Walker's work (1983) or Laumann and Knoke's in sociology (1987) comes closest to this perspective. Walker shows that patrons, often governmental ones, subsidize group formation. In this way, the State sponsors and fosters interest group pluralism.

Statist theory has not yet, to our knowledge, been applied directly to state politics. However, it may be a fruitful alternative or supplement to the literature based on Truman's work. Surely government regulations and

programs spur group organization, and the possibility of state funding spurs local governments and school districts to organize. In the state of Minnesota, for example, this has become a major issue: state legislators wonder why they give money to local schools and cities just so they can hire lobbyists to come ask for more. Still, we think scholars should proceed cautiously along this path because most students of state politics view our state governments as weak, not as strong autonomous actors with great capacity.

Turning to the other set of literature--the micro-level theories of interest groups--of course the most influential theoretical work is that of Mancur Olson (1965) on the collective action problem. His work and its intellectual progeny (e.g., Moe 1980; Hansen 1985) have been enormously influential in the discipline but is largely ignored in state-level research on interest groups. In our work (Gray and Lowery 1991, 1993; Lowery and Gray 1993), one of our aims is to construct a system-level theory that is at least consistent with what we know about micro-level behavior. Particularly in our analysis of interest group system density, we try to show how various micro-level processes--positive economies of scale that preclude entrance of new groups, declining marginal utilities in the formation of new groups with functions overlapping those of prior groups, threshold economies associated with size for new interests, and positive economies of scale in the provision of selective incentives--might account for observed macro-level developments at the state level. But we have not explored these linkages directly; they remain theoretically plausible hypotheses. We hope that others will join us in this endeavor because we see this effort as having great potential payoff via its linkage of the micro- and macro-level theories.

Measurement

The measurement of group power at the state level has proceeded along three paths: aggregate indices, case studies, and mid-level analyses falling between these two dominant approaches. At the aggregate level, we have first the reputational indices done by Morehouse (1981) and more recently by Thomas and Hrebenar (1990). Based upon a close reading of the case literature, Morehouse classified each state according to whether its overall group system was strong (the group system dominates policy-making), moderate, or weak (there are multiple competing centers of power).

Clive Thomas and Ron Hrebenar (1990) recently updated this typology. They relied on correspondents in each state to categorize the relative strength of the overall group system and to rate the relative effectiveness of various groups. Their project had the advantage of proceeding from a common definition of power (1990:141): "the extent to which interest groups as a whole influence public policy when compared to other components of the political system, such as political parties, the legislature, the governor, etc."

Based on this criterion, they identify the impact of the group system in all fifty states as either dominant, complementary, or subordinate relative to other actors.

Table 7.1 provides a comparison between the two typologies. As you see, there is quite a bit of agreement between the two measures. Presumably the differences that exist are a product of economic and social diversification within states that occurred during the 1980s. States did move toward the weak end of the continuum as expected: previously 22 states were labelled strong, and now only 9 are rated strong.

The group of experts, coordinated by Thomas and Hrebenar (1990:141), also rated individual group power where a group's power is defined as "its ability to achieve its goals as it defines them." They then compiled a list of the most influential interest in each state. School teachers' organizations head this list, followed by general business organizations and bankers' associations. No other interests were rated as powerful in more than half the states. Table 7.2 shows that business domination has lessened over time; the array of interests is now much more similar across categories of overall group strength. These findings seem sensible, suggesting that their measures have face validity. Also, it reinforces the authors' assumption that the power of interest group systems is an enduring and stable characteristic of a state.

We have attempted (Gray and Lowery 1991) to relate these two typologies to our analysis of density and diversity, with mixed success. We tentatively think that interest group power may be more dependent upon the nature of the group system itself than on the interest group system's relative position among political actors. This implies that Thomas and Hrebenar's attention to relative power may be unwarranted. It is also possible that reputations for interest group power are founded on the power of a few select groups (i.e. business), rather than on the broad attributes of the interest group system as a whole. Finally, our research suggests that the link between "real" power and the reputation for power may be tenuous during periods of rapid economic and social change, even though in the long run the two concepts are isomorphic.

Besides these widely used reputational indices, we have objective measures derived from the lists of interest groups registered to lobby in state legislatures (e.g., Gray and Lowery 1991, 1993; Hunter, Wilson, and Brunk 1991). However, measures constructed from these data do not directly measure individual group power but rather infer it. Another approach at developing objective indicators of state interest group influence is the use of data on occupations (e.g., Olson 1982; Ambrosius 1989). The principal objection to such proxy measures is that they neglect the organization of interests. Numerical strength does not equal political clout.

Turning to the other end of the continuum, we have case studies of interest group power in specific instances or with respect to specific policy areas. Few definitive conclusions about interest group power can be drawn

from these case studies, because they are idiosyncratic in their methods and analyses.

Table 7.1 Comparison of Ranking of Overall Interest Group Strength

Thomas-Hrebencar Ranking	Morehouse Ranking		
	Strong	Moderate	Weak
Dominant	Alabama		
	Alaska		
	Florida		
	Louisiana		
	Mississippi		
	New Mexico		
	South Carolina		
	Tennessee		
	West Virginia		
Dominant/ Complementary	Arkansas	Arizona	
	Hawaii	California	
	Georgia	Idaho	
	Kentucky	Nevada	
	Montana	Ohio	
	Nebraska	Utah	
	Oklahoma	Virginia	
	Oregon	Wyoming	
	Texas		
	Washington		
Complementary	Iowa	Illinois	Colorado
	New Hampshire	Indiana	Massachusetts
	North Carolina	Kansas	Michigan
		Maine	New Jersey
		Maryland	New York
		Missouri	North Dakota
		Pennsylvania	Wisconsin
		South Dakota	
Complementary/ Subordinate		Delaware	Connecticut
		Vermont	Minnesota
			Rhode Island
Subordinate			

Source: Thomas & Hrebencar (1990), p. 147; Morehouse (1981), pp. 108-112.

Table 7.2 Comparison of Ranking of Individual Interest Group Strength

	Thomas-Hrebendar Categories				Morehouse Categories		
	D	D/C	C	C/S	Strong	Moderate	Weak
General Business Orgs.	.12	.10	.14	.21			
Individual Business Orgs.	.03	.05	.04	0			
Industrial Sector	<u>.40</u>	<u>.35</u>	<u>.31</u>	<u>.29</u>			
Total Business	.55	.51	.50	.50	.75	.71	.58
General Labor Orgs.	.03	.05	.07	.11			
Individual Unions	<u>.02</u>	<u>.01</u>	<u>.02</u>	<u>0</u>			
Total Union	.05	.06	.09	.11	.05	.07	.15
Farm	.05	.04	.05	0	.07	.13	.14
Education	.13	.14	.13	.16	.07	.07	.14
Govt.	.13	.12	.09	.11	.05	.05	0
Citizens/Church	.02	.03	.06	.05			
Professional Orgs.	<u>.07</u>	<u>.09</u>	<u>.09</u>	<u>.08</u>			
Total Other	.40	.43	.41	.39			
n =	60	133	124	38			

Source: Thomas & Hrebendar (1990), p. 147; Morehouse (1980), Pp. 108-112.

In the middle of the continuum are what we inelegantly call "mid-level analyses," where the analyst gathers information on interest group interactions with policy-makers on specific policies. Often these studies rely on surveys of agency heads or legislators about the influence of external actors, such as interest groups, on specific policies (e.g., Grady 1989a, 1989b; Ambrosius and Welch 1988). Measures derived from these data have the advantage of being direct measures of interaction, but do not ask all possible actors for their perceptions. Also, they are limited to a single time period and policy area, thus reducing generalizability.

Another mid-level strategy is content analysis, developed by Gray and Lowery (1992). We analyzed newspaper stories about a particular policy over a period of years, using Newsbank. This allowed us to see which actors were present and how their roles changed over time, so that we could generalize about trends across states over time. But this procedure does not directly measure the power of specific groups relative to one another.

Present State of Research and the Future

While one could not describe the state politics field as "data-rich," it is still the case that we have relatively more data than theory. Three major on-going data collection efforts exist: Gray and Lowery's coding of all interest groups registered to lobby in state capitals during 1975, 1980, and 1990; Hunter, Wilson, and Brunk's coding of all lobbyists registered with state legislatures during 1985; Thomas and Hrebenar's compilation of state experts' reports from 1983-88. These measures are gradually entering the mainstream of state politics research through their use by various scholars.

As we have indicated, we believe that much more work needs to be done on the theoretical end. For empirical work on state interest groups to have impact, it needs to be tied into the major theories used in the rest of the discipline. We believe the greatest payoff lies in bringing interest group theories developed elsewhere into state politics, rather than applying theories of state politics to interest groups. What we have in mind is comparable to what Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) have done for public opinion in the states, creating a new data set and then applying theories of public opinion and representation to it, rather than relying solely on our conventional state politics theories (e.g., politics versus economics).

With regard to future research projects, we need more historical research, looking at the development of interest group structures over time. Which groups have gained in power, which have lost power, and why? Why have different states developed different interest group systems? How have interest group tactics changed? How have tactics diffused across states? We have recently completed the coding of our 1990 data and already see some interesting changes. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 display some of the differences

between 1980 and 1990 in numbers of registered lobbying groups. As you see, the number of groups nearly doubled, while the composition of groups changed only a bit. If we could do such analyses over a long time period, we believe a number of intriguing patterns would appear.

Figure 7.1 Comparison of the Elements of State Interest Group Systems--1980 & 1990

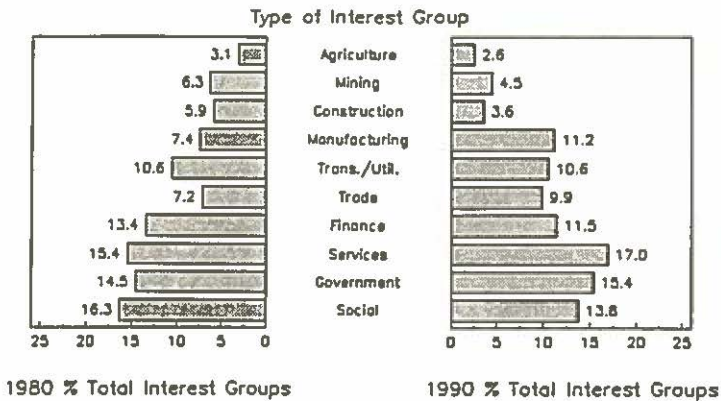
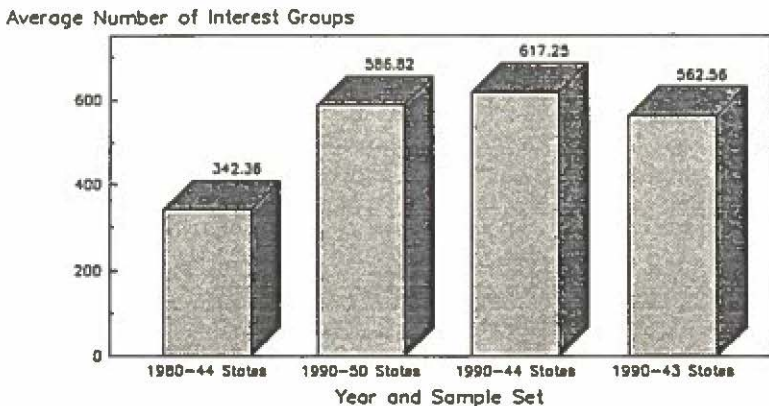


Figure 7.2 Average Number of Interest Groups in 1980 and 1990 for Several Sample Sets



Bars 1 and 3 exclude Ho., R.J., W.V., Al., Ut., & Nv. while bar 4 excludes Fl. as well.

In addition to historical (or at least over-time) research, we need more in-depth case studies. Bob Salisbury used to say that one should never study interest groups without studying public policy. At times we forget this, and to our peril. We need to ensure that we are not studying groups in the abstract but with reference to some concrete events or some specific policy or set of policies. Case studies in single states or comparative case studies across states would accomplish this objective.

Notes

1. An earlier version of these remarks was delivered at a Roundtable on the Study of Interest Groups in the American States: Current Status and Future Directions, Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, San Francisco, March, 1992.

References

- Ambrosius, Margery Marzahn. 1989. "The Role of Occupational Interests in State Economic Development Policy-Making." *Western Political Quarterly* 42:53-68.
- Ambrosius, Margery Marzahn, and Susan Welch. 1988. "State Legislators' Perceptions of Business and Labor Interests." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 13:199-209.
- Erikson, Robert S., Gerald C. Wright, Jr., and John P. McIver. 1993. *Statehouse Democracy: Public Opinion and Policy in the American States*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Grady, Dennis O. 1989a. "Business Group Influence in State Development Policymaking." Paper prepared for delivery at the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, Memphis, TN.
- _____. 1989b. "Economic Development and Administrative Power Theory: A Comparative Analysis of State Development Agencies." *Policy Studies Review* 8:322-339.
- Gray, Virginia and David Lowery. 1991. "State Interest Group System Diversity, Density, and Power." Paper prepared for delivery at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC.
- _____. 1992. "Corporatism Without Labor? Industrial Policymaking in the American States." *Journal of Public Policy* 11:315-329.
- _____. 1993. "The Diversity of State Interest Group Systems." *Political Research Quarterly* 46:81-97.
- Hansen, John Mark. 1985. "The Political Economy of Group Membership." *American Political Science Review* 79:79-96.
- Heinz, John P., Edward O. Laumann, Robert H. Salisbury, and Robert L. Nelson. 1990. "Inner Circles or Hollow Cores? Elite Networks in National Policy Systems." *Journal of Politics* 52:356-390.
- Hunter, Kenneth G., Laura Ann Wilson, and Gregory G. Brunk. 1991. "Societal Complexity and Interest Group Lobbying in the American States." *Journal of Politics* 52:488-503.
- Laumann, Edward O., and David Knoke. 1987. *The Organizational State*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

- Lowery, David, and Virginia Gray. 1993. "The Density of State Interest Group Systems." *Journal of Politics* 55:191-206.
- Moe, Terry M. 1980. *The Organization of Interests*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Morehouse, Sarah McCally. 1981. *State Politics, Parties, and Policy*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- _____. 1982. *The Rise and Decline of Nations*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 1992. *The Third House: Lobbyists and Lobbying in the States*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, and John T. Tierney. 1986. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Stone, Clarence. 1992. "Group Politics Reexamined: From Pluralism to Political Economy." Paper prepared for delivery at the Conference on the Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches and Interpretations. University of Colorado, Boulder.
- Thomas, Clive S., and Ronald J. Hrebenar. 1990. "Interest Groups in the States." In Virginia Gray, Herbert Jacob, and Robert Albritton, eds. *Politics in the American States*, 5th ed. Pp. 123-158. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman/Little Brown.
- Truman, David. 1951. *The Governmental Process*. New York: Knopf.
- Walker, Jack L. 1983. "The Origins and Maintenance of Interest Groups in America." *American Political Science Review* 77:390-406.
- Zeigler, L. Harmon. 1983. "Interest Groups in the States." In Virginia Gray, Herbert Jacob, and Kenneth N. Vines, eds. *Politics in the American States*, 4th ed. Pp. 97-131. Boston: Little, Brown.

Voluntary Organizations in Politics: Who Gets Involved?

*Kay Lehman Schlozman*¹

Among the aspects of American democracy most frequently cited as contributing to its distinctive character are the number and diversity of its voluntary organizations, and the propensity of Americans to join them. Tocqueville's comments on the subject are almost legendary. More recently, the perspective that once placed interest groups at the heart of American politics has undergone revision. Empirical studies demonstrate that, because membership in such occupationally related organizations as trade unions and professional associations is very high in many northern European nations, especially the Nordic democracies, Americans are not necessarily the most likely to be members of organizations.² Furthermore, political scientists have become aware that voluntary groups constitute only a single piece of a very complicated puzzle: membership groups are not the whole story of organized interest politics, and organized interest politics are not the whole story of the policy process in America.

Although we must qualify a perspective that was at one time surely overstated, it would nevertheless be foolish to deny the continuing significance of voluntary organizations in American politics. Indeed, it is probably not an exaggeration to argue that democracy on a national scale is unimaginable without a vigorous and independent associational life, and that American democracy is unparalleled in the variety of its voluntary organizations and the range of their concerns.

Unfortunately, the available empirical resources for studying citizen participation in voluntary associations are limited. Although we now have several decades of longitudinal data about citizen activity in electoral politics--partisan commitments, vote choices, level of campaign involvement and so on--we have no archive that would allow us to track in analogous detail Americans' involvement in the realm of group politics. Many of the questions that are raised about electoral politics--the nature and amount of citizen activity, the extent to which those who take part are representative of those who do not, its impact on public outcomes--are germane to the arena of group

politics. However, our systematic data about organizational membership and activity are very rudimentary indeed.³

The Citizen Participation Study

In the context of a larger study of voluntary activity in America, Sidney Verba of Harvard University, Henry Brady of the University of California at Berkeley, Norman Nie of the University of Chicago, and I have collected detailed information about organizational participation. In our survey, we asked a lengthy and complex set of questions in an attempt to map the terrain of citizen involvement in voluntary associations. This paper reports on the thinking behind our approach and gives some preliminary results about the dimensions of organizational affiliation in America. Because the domain of organizational activity is so complex, and because the results depend so significantly upon what instruments are used to gauge organizational involvement, more space will be devoted to nuts-and-bolts issues of measurement than ordinarily would be the case.

The Citizen Participation Study uses a large-scale, two-stage survey of the American public to focus on voluntary activity, not simply in politics but also in churches and organizations. The first stage consisted of a 15,000-case random telephone survey of the American public. These short, screener interviews provided a profile of political and non-political activity as well as the basic demographic information. We then conducted longer, in-person interviews with 2,517 of the original 15,000 respondents weighing the sample so as to produce a disproportionate number of both activists as well as African-Americans and Latinos.

Our initial telephone screener included a general question about membership in organizations, "for example, unions or professional associations, fraternal groups, recreational organizations, political issue organizations, community or school groups, and so on." Respondents who indicated membership in any organizations were asked how many. The follow-up interviews included an extensive battery of questions about organizational involvement.

Measuring Organizational Involvement

Measuring organizational involvement is complicated. What appear to be relatively technical decisions about measures in fact have implications for the very definition of the subject. Hence, it is necessary to ask two questions, the answer to neither of which is obvious: What kind of organizations? What kind of involvement?

The range of organizations that Americans can join is vast. Indeed, the roster of known American organizations (Burek 1992) fills several fat volumes and includes organizations as well-known as the Girl Scouts and as little-noticed as the U.S. Hang Gliding Association. What is more, such a listing does not begin to include the myriad locally-based organizations that escape the attention of those compiling a national register.

These voluntary associations vary substantially in their relationship to politics. For some organizations, for example, the National Abortion Rights Action League or the National Taxpayers Union, political goals are intrinsic to organizational objectives, and a high proportion of organizational activity is directed towards influencing political outcomes. Other organizations, for example, a local bowling league or a fraternal organization like the Elks, have little or nothing to do with politics. Between these two poles is a long continuum encompassing organizations having quite different levels of political involvement. Some, for example, labor unions, maintain an ongoing presence in politics and combine political and non-political means of furthering their members' interests. Others, for example, the March of Dimes or the American Association of University Professors, take part in politics more sporadically when an issue of concern arises.

To translate this stunning organizational array into terms comprehensible to survey respondents is a tricky task. If they are asked a straightforward, but general question about membership in organizations, respondents are unlikely either to know exactly what is meant or to be able to recall instantly all the organizations to which they belong. Therefore, in order to direct their attention and to jog their memories, it is essential to provide respondents with a fairly detailed list of kinds of organizations, a list that is long enough to be inclusive but not so long as to induce sleep. In addition, the list must use common-sense categories that respondents can recognize but be constructed to permit aggregation into analytically more meaningful categories.

Care must be taken not only in defining the categories but also in placing them in the order in which they are to be asked. Many organizations--for example the National Medical Association (a professional association of black physicians), the Lutheran Youth Fellowship, the Catholic War Veterans, and the Buddhists Concerned for Animals--legitimately fit into more than one category. It is necessary to make discretionary decisions about the preferred category for such organizations. These decisions, in turn, become the basis for ordering the categories on the list: the list should be constructed so that the preferred categories for the ambiguous cases are ranked higher with accompanying instructions to interviewers to the effect that, unless the respondent objected, an organization that falls into more than one category should be placed into the first category for which it is appropriate.

Another difficulty in measuring organizational involvement is that membership, in the usual sense in which one joins the Masons or the American Medical Association, is not a pre-requisite for organizational

involvement. Besides card-carrying membership, there are two other avenues to organizational involvement. First, citizens can support an organization simply by writing a check--to a charity like the Heart Association or United Way or to a political organization like Environmental Defense Fund or the Foundation for Handgun Education--without ever becoming members. As is well-known, in an era in which organizations take advantage of computerized mass-mailings and cheap long-distance rates to raise money, organizational affiliations that are confined to making financial contributions are increasingly common. Furthermore, it is possible to give time in an organizational setting without any kind of formal membership. Many non-profit institutions utilize the labor of volunteers, who are not members in any ordinary sense. Tutoring children in an after-school program, ladling in a soup kitchen, arranging a benefit for the art museum, and sitting on the board of the hospital all entail donating substantial time in an organizational context without constituting membership.

These concerns were behind the battery of items about organizational involvement.⁴ To discern organizational affiliations that are not memberships in the ordinary sense, we inquired about making financial contributions and giving time as well as about membership. To establish whether an organization is politically engaged for each organization mentioned, we asked whether it sometimes takes stands on public issues--either nationally or locally. And, to encompass the astonishing range of American voluntary associations, we asked about no fewer than twenty types:

- A. Service clubs or fraternal organizations, such as the Lions or Kiwanis or a local women's club or a fraternal organization at a school
- B. Veterans organizations, such as the American Legion or the Veterans of Foreign Wars
- C. Groups affiliated with [the respondent's] religion, such as the Knights of Columbus or B'nai B'rith⁵
- D. Organizations representing [the respondent's] *own* particular nationality or ethnic group, such as the Polish-American Congress, the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund, or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- E. Organizations for the elderly or senior citizens
- F. Organizations mainly interested in issues promoting the rights or welfare of women--an organization, such as the National Organization for Women, or the Eagle Forum, or the American Association of University Women
- G. Labor unions⁶
- H. Other organizations associated with [the respondent's] work, such as a business or professional association, or a farm organization⁷
- I. Organizations active on one particular political issue, such as the environment, or abortion (on either side), or gun control (again on either side) or consumer's rights, or the rights of taxpayers, or any other issue

- J. Non-partisan or civic organizations interested in the political life of the community or the nation--such as the League of Women Voters or a better government association
- K. Organizations that support general liberal or conservative causes, such as the Americans for Democratic Action or the Conservative Caucus
- L. Organizations active in supporting candidates in elections, such as a party organization
- M. Youth groups, such as the Girl Scouts or the 4-H
- N. Literary, art, discussion, or study groups
- O. Hobby clubs, sports or country clubs, or other groups or clubs for leisure time activities
- P. Associations related to where [the respondent] lives--neighborhood or community associations, homeowners' or condominium associations, or block clubs
- Q. Organizations that provide social services in such fields as health or service to the needy--for instance, a hospital, a cancer or heart drive, or a group like the Salvation Army that works for the poor⁸
- R. Educational institutions--local schools, [the respondent's] own school or college, or organizations associated with education such as school alumni associations or school service organizations like the PTA
- S. Organizations that are active in providing cultural services to the public--for example, museums, symphonies, or public radio or television
- T. Other organizations⁹

These categories, which were designed to be readily understood by respondents, often combine organizations with similar substantive focus and very different organizational characteristics. Although these organizational categories are useful for illustrative purposes, it is often more illuminating to consider analytical dimensions than actual organizational category.

For each organizational category for which a respondent indicated involvement, the respondent was asked the number of such organizations and a series of follow-up questions about the organization (or, if more than one in the category, the organization in which the respondent is most involved), including the actual name.¹⁰

How Much Organizational Involvement?

As is so often the case in survey research, with respect to organizational involvement, it matters greatly for the results obtained how questions are asked. Only 45 percent of respondents indicated organizational membership in answer to the general question contained in the screener, and a mere 8 percent indicated four or more memberships. When shown the extensive list of kinds of organizations during the follow-up interview, fully 79 percent of the respondents reported organizational involvement--either membership or financial contribution--and 41 percent indicated four or more affiliations.¹¹

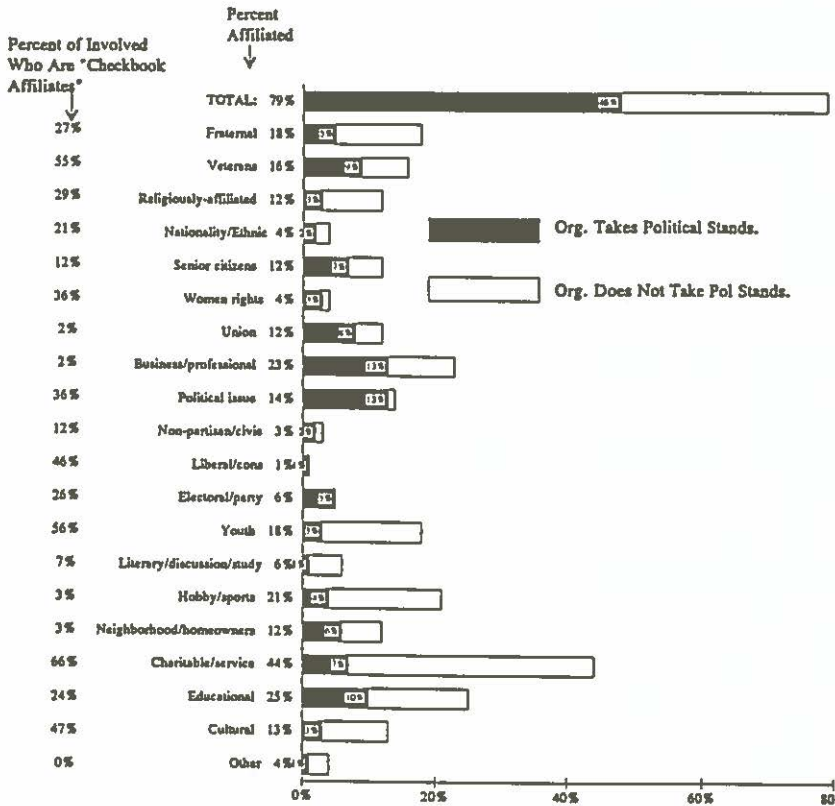
This definition, of course, requires a rather low level of commitment as evidence of organizational involvement. Of those indicating involvement in at least one organization, 65 percent (or 51 percent of all respondents) reported that they have attended a meeting within the past twelve months; 42 percent (or 34 percent of all respondents) reported that they are active members, that is, that they have served on a committee, given time for special projects, or helped organize meetings; and 28 percent (or 22 percent of the total) reported that, within the past five years, they have served on the board or been an officer of an organization with which they are still involved.

Figure 8.1 decomposes these aggregate figures and gives information about involvement in twenty categories of organizations. Not surprisingly, involvement ranges broadly across these categories. A near majority, 44 percent, is involved with a charitable or social service organization, often by virtue of having given a financial contribution; a mere 1 percent reported involvement with an ideological organization that supports general liberal or conservative causes. There is substantial variation across these categories in the proportion of those involved whose affiliation is confined to having made a contribution. Two-thirds of those involved in charitable and social service organizations and a majority of those involved in veterans' groups and youth organizations are donors but not members: while at the other extreme, nearly all who are involved in literary, art, or discussion groups, hobby or sports clubs, neighborhood and homeowners' associations, business, professional, and farm groups, or unions professed membership.

Figure 8.1 also presents, for each kind of organization, the proportion of those affiliated who indicated that the organization sometimes takes stands on public issues—either locally or nationally. Sixty-one percent of those indicating organizational involvement (or 48 percent of all respondents) are affiliated with an organization that takes stands in politics.¹² Lower, but still substantial, proportions reported greater commitment: 29 percent of all respondents said that they had gone to a meeting; 18 percent are active; and 11 percent are on the board of an organization that takes stands on public issues either nationally or locally. Naturally, there is tremendous variation across the types of organizations, variation that seems to reflect in a reasonable way their differing purposes. Nearly all the respondents in a political issue organization, a general liberal or conservative group, or an organization that supports candidates—in contrast to fewer than one in every five in a literary, art, or discussion group, a charity or social service organization, or a hobby or sports club—reported that it sometimes takes stands on public issues.

There is some question as to whether respondents, especially those whose commitment is limited, really know whether their organizations take stands on politics. Like hypothesis testers, they might make two kinds of mistakes: aging organizational activity in politics where it does not exist, or failing to know about it when it does. Presumably, the latter error would be more

Figure 8.1 Involvement in Various Kinds of Organizations



common than the former. Reading actual interviews, which contained the names of organizations mentioned by respondents, provides some evidence of their failure to recognize the political activities of organizations. From time to time, an organization that has been prominent on the political scene is recorded as not taking stands in politics.

In accounting for the perception of an organization's engagement in politics, Baumgartner and Walker (1988:923) suggest that the actively involved are more likely to report that an organization takes political stands. At first glance, our data lend substantial support to this contention: among those affiliated with at least one organization, 70 percent had attended a meeting within the past six months, but only 44 percent of those had reported an affiliation with an organization that takes political stands. These data do not make any provision for ensuring that respondents--who, if affiliated at all, are likely to be affiliated with more than one organization--are finding politics in

the *same* organizations whose meetings they have attended, however. Indeed, when the data are disaggregated and analyzed separately for each organizational affiliation, the relationship is much more modest: using the affiliation as the unit of analysis, when respondents indicated attendance at meetings, they reported political stands in 44 percent of the cases; when they indicated no attendance at meetings, they reported political stands in 39 percent of the cases.¹³

Who Is Involved?

To the extent that voluntary associations provide one important, though not the only, avenue for the direct representation of citizen interests before the government, it is critical to know who is involved. Social scientists have long been aware that socio-economic status is related both to involvement in voluntary associations and to political participation.¹⁴ Focusing directly upon the organizations (many of which are not voluntary associations) that are active in politics, students of organized interest politics have shown the implications of this relationship for the set of interests that are represented--demonstrating the continuing relevance of E.E. Schattschneider's (1960) well-known observation about the upper-class accent of the chorus in the pluralist heaven.¹⁵

The data from the Citizen Participation Study are fully consistent with these observations. As shown in Figure 8.2, those with high levels of education and income (among whom organizational affiliation is virtually universal) and, to a less extent, Anglo-Whites and men--in contrast to the less well-educated and well-heeled, African-Americans, Latinos, and women--are especially likely to be involved in organizations. Interestingly, each of these tendencies is exacerbated with respect to involvement in organizations that take stands in politics: the gaps between the well-educated and the less-schooled, the rich and the poor, Anglo-Whites and minorities, especially Latinos, and men and women are even more pronounced when it comes to organizations that are politically engaged. In addition, the differences among groups defined by ethnicity or gender are only partially the result of differences in education. Except at the highest levels of education, a gap remains between men and women and between Anglo-Whites and African-Americans and, especially, Latinos.¹⁶

Since the same logic is used to explain the over-representation in both voluntary associations and political activity of those with high levels of education, it is interesting to speculate as to why the advantaged are even more likely to be involved in organizations that take stands in politics than in voluntary associations more generally. There are alternative plausible explanations: that the well-educated have different tastes in associations and,

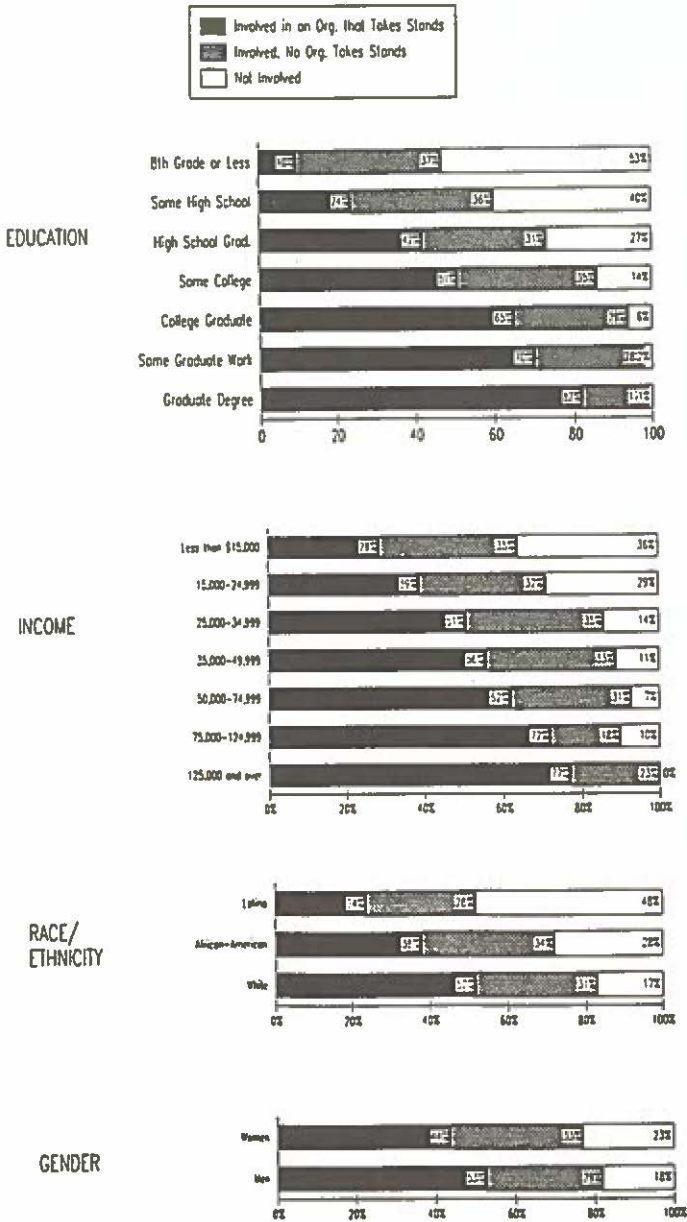
thus join not only more, but different kinds of organizations; or that they join the same kinds of organizations as everyone else, but are more likely see (or imagine) political relevance than their less well-educated fellow members.

The data seem to lend more support for the first alternative, that the well-educated make distinctive choices when it come to organizations. In the follow-up survey, college graduates constitute 25 percent of the respondents and 30 percent of those who are involved in at least one organization. Because they are more likely to be members of or donors to multiple organizations, they account for 40 percent of the organizational affiliations. These affiliations are not, however, distributed evenly across the various organizational categories. Their representation is relatively low in veterans' associations (in which they are 22 percent of those involved), senior citizens' groups (25 percent), and unions (27 percent). In contrast, they are especially over-represented in several kinds of organizations: those, such as museums or symphonies, providing cultural services (for which they account for 57 percent of those affiliated); literary, art, discussion, or study groups (57 percent); and business, professional, and farm groups (55 percent). Indeed, an even more striking pattern is found for all of the kinds of organizations for which those affiliated, regardless of education, are likely to report organizational stands in politics—those supporting general liberal or conservative causes (63 percent), civic groups (62 percent), women's rights organizations (51 percent), candidate and party organizations (47 percent), and single issue organizations (42 percent). In the aggregate, college graduates constitute nearly half (47 percent) of the affiliations in these five categories.

There is less evidence for the other potential explanation—that the increased likelihood of the well-educated reporting that the organizations with which they are affiliated take stands in politics is related to an ability to recognize political salience in contexts where their less well-educated fellow members do not. The various categories differ, of course, in the extent to which the organizations drawn under each rubric take stands in politics. Considering only those involved with organizations in each category, however, there seems to be no systematic tendency for college graduates to have been more likely than others, in the same kinds of organizations who have less formal education, to indicate that the organization takes stands in politics.¹⁷

What we have seen confirms the findings of others who have demonstrated that the organizational input into politics is skewed towards the well-heeled and the well-educated. It is sometimes argued, however, that what matters for the representation of political interests is not what kinds of people are active, but what kinds of messages the policy-makers hear. According to this line of reasoning, what is significant for representation is not the demographic characteristics of activists, but their opinions on public issues.¹⁸ The Citizen Participation Study permits us to take this logic one step further. Even if the attitudes of those active in politically relevant

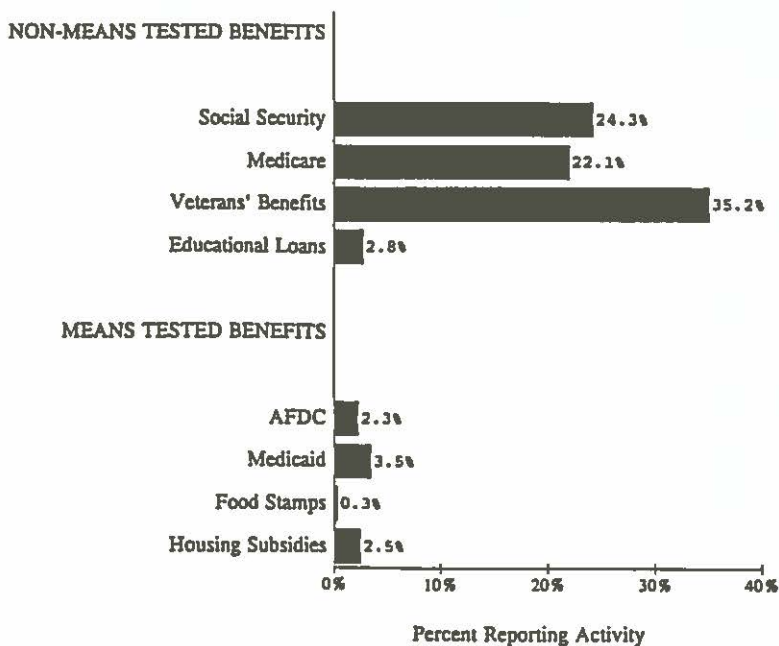
Figure 8.2 Organizational Involvement of Demographic Groups



organizations are representative, there is no guarantee of any link between their opinions on a wide range of issues and their organizational affiliations, and analysis of the organizations active in politics suggests strongly that some kinds of opinions get much weightier political representation than others.

In our study, we focused on one set of obviously politically salient constituencies, those who indicate that someone in their household receives various kinds of government benefits. We asked respondents in households receiving each kind of government benefit, whether they had taken various political actions with respect to that benefit, including joining an organization dealing with that program. As shown in Figure 8.3, those who receive several kinds of non-means-tested entitlements (Social Security, Medicare, or Veterans' Benefits) are much more likely to belong to an organization dealing with that program than are those who receive means-tested benefits (AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, or housing subsidies).¹⁹ In short, with respect to one important set of constituencies, the economically disadvantaged are clearly at a disadvantage, when it comes to organizational representation.

Figure 8.3 Belong to an Organization Related to Benefit Program



Summary

This paper has outlined the concerns that animated the collection of detailed information about Americans' participation in voluntary associations. Using a lengthy list of types of organizations, and including financial contributions and donations of time as well as memberships of a more traditional sort, we found organizational involvement to be very widespread among American citizens. These data confirm what dozens of previous studies in many contexts have demonstrated: that those with higher levels of education and income are more likely to be affiliated with organizations. We have seen, however, that this pattern is even more pronounced when it comes to organizations that take stands in politics: the well-educated are particularly likely to be involved in politically relevant organizations, a regularity that seems to derive from the distinctiveness of the kinds of organizations in which they choose to become involved, rather than from any tendency to be more likely to perceive an organization as political, or to be more organizationally active than their fellow group members of lower educational attainments.

Students of American politics are blessed with several decades of longitudinal data about the electoral habits and choices of American citizens. Perhaps this brief glimpse of what we can learn from careful surveys has demonstrated that we should collect analogous information about organizational affiliation on an ongoing basis.

Notes

1. The author would like to thank the National Science Foundation, the Spencer Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Hewlett Foundation for generous support.

2. With respect to organizational membership, Americans fall in the upper-middle ranks, behind the Scandinavians and ahead of, for example, the Italians and British. See, among others, Smith (1975:250); Wilson (1981:132-144); and Dahl (1982:67-68).

3. In their 1967 survey of political participation in America, Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie (1972) asked about organizational activity. Their questions were replicated in the 1987 General Social Survey. The list of organizations used by Verba and Nie, unfortunately, does not contain a category for political issue groups and, generally, gives short shrift to the kinds of organizations that are active in politics. Gallup has asked a fairly general question about organization membership from time to time. The Gallup question excludes union membership and does not include a list of types of organizations. As we shall see, the failure to cue respondents with a list has implications for the proportion of who indicate organizational membership.

4. The approach outlined here is similar to that employed by Frank R. Baumgartner and Jack L. Walker (1988), who brought many of these concerns to the construction of a battery of items about organizational involvement that was used on the 1985 pilot to the National Election Study. Although they did not inquire about donations of time without formal membership, they asked about contributions as well as membership and used a list of ten types of organizations that had been designed to provide categories for the political issue and citizen

advocacy groups that have become increasingly prominent in American politics since the 1960s. Unfortunately, their questions were not included in the subsequent full National Election Study.

5. Instructions to interviewers specified that this category was not to include activity within or contributions to a congregation, which were covered in a separate section on church activity. Some previous surveys of organizational membership have considered--erroneously, in our view--membership in a church or synagogue as a voluntary association membership. For a discussion of this issue and extensive bibliographical references, see Smith (1975:249) and Tomeh (1973:96).

6. Some previous surveys have omitted labor union membership on the theory that union membership is not genuinely voluntary. In important respects, however, unions behave like other voluntary associations and to omit them is to overlook an important source of group affiliation--and, for many union members, the only group affiliation--both in the U.S. and in other democracies. Besides, even in non-right-to-work states, it is possible to construe unions not as coercing membership, but as controlling access to a highly valued selective benefit, a job.

7. Respondents were instructed to include their activity in any organizations of which their employers were members. For example, a corporate manager who is an officer of a trade association would have recorded that activity in this category even though it is the firm, rather than the respondent, that is the actual member of the organization.

8. For the organizations in categories Q-S, respondents were asked about giving time as well as about membership and making donations.

9. Instructions to interviewers specified that if respondents insisted upon a particular categorization, their wishes were to be honored. To the extent that respondents sought assistance or were open to suggestion in placing organizations in categories, however, interviewers were advised to put an organization in the first category on the list for which it was appropriate when, as is often the case, it straddled two categories.

10. Using available references, we later cleaned and coded these organization names, over 6,000 entries. Although we deferred to the wishes of respondents when an organization could legitimately be placed in more than one category, there were many cases in which an organization landed in what was clearly the incorrect classification. These errors were corrected. As part of this process, we coded additional information, for example, whether the respondent indicated affiliation with an organization concerned about a particular issue such as the environment or a particular demographic group, such as the young or Latinos. We even coded affiliations with certain organizations commanding large memberships and, thus, noted the 131 members or donors to public radio or television, the 243 members of PTAs, and the 182 members of the AARP. (These are weighted cases. The actual numbers of cases are higher).

11. We should note that the 79 percent figure obtained by using the detailed list of organizations puts the United States on a par with the levels of organizational involvement reported by Dahl (1982) for Sweden. The sensitivity of results to question wording, however, suggests that cross-national comparisons must be treated with caution.

12. As mentioned, our strategy was to ask about only one organization in each category for which a respondent indicated membership or contribution. In so doing, we may have missed involvement in organizations that take stands in politics. For example, a respondent who is on the board of the local senior citizens' center would probably have chose to report on that activity over membership in the American Association of Retired Persons. However, the latter is deeply embroiled in public controversies while the former might concentrate on the direct delivery of services. For this category at least, this respondent would have been recorded incorrectly as having no politically salient organizational involvement. Forty percent of those who reported that none of the organizations with which they were involved took stands in politics (representing 15 percent of respondents indicating organizational involvement and 12 percent of all respondents) had multiple organizational affiliations in at least one category.

13. When the data are broken into organizational categories, the relationship between attendance at meetings and perception of political relevance is sometimes reversed. For example, among those involved in senior citizens' organizations, only 40 percent of meeting attenders, as opposed to 67 percent of those who have not been to a meeting, reported political stands. What this may reflect is a situation in which the particular organizations that attract members to meetings are, in fact, less active in politics than those that do not. The American Association of Retired Persons, an organization that is a vigorous political advocate for senior citizens, has millions of relatively passive members. A local senior citizens group, whose purpose was primarily social, would be more likely to generate attendance at meetings, but less likely to take stands on public issues.

14. For extensive bibliography on the correlates of involvement in voluntary associations, see Knoke (1986). Extensive references to the literature on political participation and, in particular, the role of socio-economic status in political participation can be found in Bennett and Bennett (1986:185 ff). Among others, Wolfinger and Rosenstone (1980) and Jennings and Niemi (1981) provide explanations for the universal relationship between socio-economic status and all forms of political activity. Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie (1991) explain this relationship in terms of the concrete resources--for example, money, verbal facility, and politically relevant skills--that accrue to those who have high levels of education and prestigious occupations.

15. Schlozman and Tierney (1986) catalogued the nearly 7,000 organizations that are active in Washington politics and found that the pressure system is biased towards the well heeled, especially business.

16. The data upon which these assertions rest are contained in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 of the Appendix. In terms of political participation more generally, Latinos, even Latino citizens, are less active than Anglo-Whites or African-Americans, a deficit that is related not only to their disadvantage with respect to the various political resources that derive from socio-economic position, but also to their lesser proficiency in English and to the relative absence of compensatory opportunities to develop politically relevant skills in Catholic, as opposed to Protestant, churches. On these themes, see Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie (1993b).

17. The data are shown in Table 8.3 of the Appendix. It should be noted that, for many of the organizational categories, the number of respondents having no high school diploma who reported involvement is very small. The figures for those of limited education should be, therefore, be interpreted with caution.

18. For a consideration of this contention with respect to political participation more generally, see Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Nie (1993a).

19. The absence of organizational representation for one group of beneficiaries of government largesse, those in households receiving student loans, is striking. It should be noted that the student loan program is, in fact, means-tested. Since those who receive student loans are much more likely to be middle-class than are the beneficiaries of the other means-tested programs, student loans have been grouped with the non-means-tested government benefits.

Appendix

Table 8.1 Organizational Affiliation by Education and Race/Ethnicity

	No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	College Degree
Percent affiliated with an organization				
Latino	32	49	68	85
African-American	53	64	87	96
White	60	76	87	97
Percent affiliated with an organization that takes stands in politics				
Latino	11	20	32	69
African-American	11	28	55	72
White	23	46	52	73

Table 8.2 Organizational Affiliation by Education and Gender

	No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	College Degree
Percent affiliated with an organization				
Men	61	76	86	95
Women	51	70	86	97
Percent affiliated with an organization that takes stands in politics				
Men	23	45	58	71
Women	18	39	45	71

Table 8.3 Perception of Organizational Involvement in Politics by Education

	No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	College Degree
Fraternal	26	25	35	32
Veterans	61	50	66	64
Religiously affiliated	9	30	31	25
Nationality/Ethnic	55	55	57	70
Senior citizens	39	66	56	71
Women's rights	72	70	70	87
Union	42	70	68	70
Business/Professional	75	53	52	63
Political issue	82	91	92	96
Non-partisan/Civic	41	46	70	62
Liberal/Conservative		100	100	93
Electoral/Party	100	96	89	94
Youth	4	13	26	20
Discussion/Study	22	7	19	
Hobby/Sports	14	15	21	18
Neighborhood/Block	25	47	54	52
Charitable/Service	14	11	15	22
Educational	7	46	50	40
Cultural	66	23	32	22
Other	22	13	19	54

Percent of those involved reporting that organization takes stands in politics

References

- Baumgartner, Frank R., and Walker, Jack L. 1988. "Survey Research and Membership in Voluntary Associations." *American Journal of Political Science* 32:908-928.
- Bennett, Stephen Earl, and Bennett, Linda L.M. 1986. "Political Participation," in Samuel Long, ed. *Annual Review of Political Science*. Pp. 157-204. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Burek, Deborah M. 1992. *The Encyclopedia of Associations*. 27th ed. Detroit: Gale Research Co.
- Dahl, Robert A. 1982. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Jennings, M. Kent, and Niemi, Richard. 1981. *Generations and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Knoke, David. 1986. "Associations and Interest Groups." *Annual Review of Sociology* 12:1-21.
- Schattschneider, E.E. 1960. *The Semisovereign People*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Schlozman, Kay Lehman, and Tierney, John T. 1986. *Organized Interests and American Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Smith, David Horton. 1975. "Voluntary Action and Voluntary Groups." *Annual Review of Sociology* 1:247-270.
- Tomch, Aida K. 1973. "Formal Voluntary Organizations: Participation, Correlates, and Interrelationships." *Sociological Enquiry* 43:89-122.
- Verba, Sidney, and Nie, Norman H. 1972. *Participation in America*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Verba, Sidney, Schlozman, Kay Lehman, Brady, Henry, and Nie, Norman H. 1991. "Resources for Participation." Paper prepared for delivery at the 1991 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- _____. 1993a. "Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do They Say?" *American Political Science Review* 87:303-318.
- _____. 1993b. "Race, Ethnicity, and Political Resources: Participation in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science*. 23.
- Wilson, Graham K. 1981. *Interest Groups in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wolfinger, Raymond E. and Rosenstone, Steven J. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press.

PART TWO

Applied Perspectives

Comments by Practitioners

Mildred A. Schwartz (*Workshop Organizer*):

The second part of our workshop on interest groups shifts to practitioners, those people directly involved in the activities we associate with such groups. My invitation to our speakers explained that they would have an audience of political scientists. We should be pleased that our speakers felt it would be worthwhile for them to participate in this kind of session. They indicated a willingness to talk to you about what they do and to answer your questions. Perhaps we have been helped in getting such cooperation by the fact that several of our speakers also have academic experience. In all cases, we are very appreciative that these people were willing to take time from their busy schedules to be with us.

Let me begin by introducing each of our speakers in the order in which I'll call on them. The first is James D. Nowlan, who is here as the representative of the Illinois Taxpayers Association. I should add that Jim is a good friend, a former colleague, and also a political scientist. Brenda Harrison is the director of state government affairs for the American Dental Association, which has its headquarters here in Chicago. Next I will call on Dr. Bruce Douglas, who will speak about his work with the Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco. Bruce is a dentist by profession, and while he has taught in the School of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I recruited him for this workshop before I knew of his connection with the academic world. Our fourth representative is Ann Irving, who works with the Citizens' Utility Board, also known as CUB. Aida L. Giachello also has an academic connection, as a current faculty member in the Jane Adams School of Social Work at UIC. Her presence here today is independent of her work role. She was instead invited to tell us about her involvement in the Southwest Community Congress.

As you may already discern from my introductions, I deliberately invited spokespersons from a variety of interest groups. I wanted to have them range from national to local groups, and from large formal organizations to small and more informal ones. I hope I have succeeded in bringing together some significant examples of what we include in the concept of interest group. Perhaps the one interest group you notice to be missing is organized labor.

I had wanted to include a representative from a labor union, but a regular meeting of the Illinois Federation of Labor happened to coincide with this workshop and consequently no one was available.

I have asked our speakers to prepare a brief comment, describing their organizations and what they do in them. In my invitation to them, I suggested that they describe what their group stands for, who it represents, and the strategies that are used to get its message across.

James Nowlan (*President, Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois*):

Thank you, Mildred. The Taxpayers Federation of Illinois has counterparts in most of the other states. Our organization was founded 50 years ago by the "captains of commerce" in Illinois, such as Robert E. Wood of Sears and Montgomery Ward, Thomas Donnelly, the printer, and Douglas Stewart, head of Quantro. Basically, they formed the organization with two objectives: (1) to keep tax rates as broad-based as possible, consistent with a progressive strain of interests; and (2) to insure an efficient economy and a generally good government, however that might be defined. The organization has 501C(4) status, that is, we are organized to receive contributions that are not taxed. We also have a 501C(3) group for which we seek charitable foundations' support for studies, such as this one just out, titled "RX for Medicaid." In the study, Bob Mandeville, a former state budget director, sets out some policy prescriptions for the state of Illinois on that challenging policy area.

Over the years, the organization has evolved into one that basically advocates rather broad public positions on taxation and budget performance issues. Over time, the nature of the organization has changed, but the benefits are, to use the political science terms, collective in nature to the business community at large. We've also had to develop special benefits for individual members, particularly special services related to tax policies and rule-making through the State Department of Revenue. Our organization and staff can serve individual members that may not want to become embroiled by name with the Department of Revenue. We also provide special benefits to individual members through our work providing general intelligence about what is going on in the state capitol, and by providing specific information when the objectives are consistent with the values of our organization. We have about 250 business members who provide support for a budget of about \$600,000 per year.

We perceive our organization as having influence, not power: influence in the sense that we are perceived to be a credible, objective, non-partisan source of information about taxation and related public policies. Thus, we see our role as charting a slightly different course than one influencing the policy outcomes of the moment, such as attempting to induce legislators to vote

differently than they might have voted otherwise. We have operated through a large number of publications that go to some 3,000 persons who are central to the policy community of Illinois: the media, legislators, executive branch staff, business leaders, and relevant academics. We try to amplify our publications through extensive opinion essay writing. For example, I'm marketing a piece based on the Medicaid publication that I mentioned before. I will take it to *The Chicago Tribune* first, and if they don't accept it, I will go to all of the daily newspapers in the state. I brought a few samples of our monthly publication, titled "Tax Facts," the lightest one of which is dry as unbuttered toast. It is basically a series on the legislation we support, bills that would be of particular interest to our tax executive members. Inside is my regular column; in this issue, I do a "day in the life" of our lobbyist, Joan Parker.

We do build coalitions with other organizations. I'll close with an illustration of coalition building at the moment. There is an issue called "classification of property or personal real estate." This is an important issue for business organizations that have billions of dollars in machinery and equipment currently classified as personal property, and thus exempt from our property taxes. There is real concern that court decisions will have the effect of redefining machinery and equipment as real estate property, which will be taxable like building and land. We are developing a coalition with the Manufacturers Association, with the state Chamber, and other business-related organizations to see that the statutory language confirms that the machinery equipment is to be considered personal property, and not real estate property.

Brenda Harrison (*Director, State Government Affairs, American Dental Association*):

The American Dental Association (ADA) represents approximately 140,000 dentists across this country, accounting for about 76 percent of all American dentists. We are interested and dedicated to serving both the public and the interests of the dental profession, and I think we do that well. We have a unique tripartite membership structure that has been tested in court and upheld. In order for members to belong to the national level, they must belong to the state and local dental society. I have observed this structure at the state and national levels for some years, and it seems to function well. We are one of the few groups that operates in this way.

We have a 418 member House of Delegates which sets our policy. These are dentists that are elected through their state associations. The number of delegates per state varies with population. We also have a board of trustees consisting of 16 dentists drawn from 16 different geographical districts across the country. The board of trustees serves as our managerial body: it hires the

executive director, who is then responsible for all our employees. We have a staff of about 400 employees. But I can tell you that there is more internal politics within the American Dental Association, than there is outside. We would be a great case for someone who would like to do a study of intra-group problems.

We have a number of membership benefits, including scientific research; we do that little notice on your toothpaste that says, "approved by the ADA." We also provide financial and legal services for our members, and a variety of practical management services as well. But the most interesting thing to you and to me is, of course, our legislative division. This division consists of two branches. One is our Washington office which actually lobbies Congress. We have four lobbyists who are out there every day on the Hill. In addition, we have a state government affairs division in my department which was created back in 1985. Licensure is a state function and many decisions that affect the practice of dentistry are made at the state level, and the national association decided that it better find out what was going on in the states. My department arose naturally from the tripartite membership structure.

We primarily perform two roles, one substantive and one strategic. First, we work with all of our constituents or state societies, and we attempt to encourage them to either support or oppose legislation that is consistent with the ADA policy which was set by the House of Delegates. We also monitor approximately 30 different issues of interest to dentists in all 50 states across the country, so we look at some five to six thousand pieces of legislation every year. We are able to identify the trends that we see, and then alert all of the states involved of the issues they may be facing. It used to be, 15 years ago, that the big states, such as California, New York, Illinois, Texas, and Pennsylvania, would initiate the most issues. But today we are finding that something may happen first in New Hampshire or Delaware. Once an issue is identified, we develop resource materials that will be useful across the country.

Second, we work individually with each state dental society on its particular legislative issues. The state societies run the gamut in terms of sophistication. For instance, the Californians have great departments of legislative affairs, with a couple of lobbyists on board and extensive support staff. On the other hand, the smaller states might have an executive director serving as administrator, lobbyist, washroom attendant, and whatever else needs to be done. In those small states, we provide a variety of services, ranging from drafting legislation to analyzing bills to providing research. In addition, we allot time to educating dentists on how to become politically active. Dentists traditionally have not been very political. They decided that government should not intrude upon their kingdom, which was their office. But as you may know, over the last couple of years dentistry has been a subject of considerable controversy. AIDS and amalgam fillings have been recent topics of television shows and newspaper stories, and the coverage has

not always been positive. Such attention translates into legislative issues at the federal, state, and local levels. So a lot of our effort is spent getting to dentists, educating them on the political system, and telling them that they really need to be involved or live under the laws of those who are involved, and who might have desires different than dentists. Part of this effort is made in conjunction with our political action committee.

Bruce Douglas (*Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco*):

I was asked to speak as the state chairman of the Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco, an organization which exists in the state of Illinois, and in somewhat different forms, in practically every other state and at the national level. I have the unique advantage of my son having been one of the directors of the National Coalition on Smoking and Health, and therefore I've had an opportunity to work with a "real chip off the old block." We were snuffing out cigarettes as long as 25 or 30 years ago, when this room would have been a horrendous mass of smoke. And one of the things I told my son years ago, which happily was repeated recently by the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis Sullivan, is "It is immoral for civilized societies to condone the promotion and advertising of products which, when used as intended, cause disability and death." This is a profoundly important statement that everyone in this room can appreciate. There is no longer any debate as to whether cigarettes and other tobacco products are dangerous to the health of the person using them or whether second-hand smoke harms non-smokers. Only the tobacco industry questions these scientific and medical facts, and that is only because of the industry's concern with the bottom line, not health.

Now, I am not going to get off on an advocacy tangent, but rather I am going to talk about the lobbying on this issue, and the complicated and difficult task of fighting one of the most monolithic enemies that mankind has to deal with, the tobacco industry. As a little David, we have been fighting a Goliath from the political, socioeconomic, professional, and scientific perspectives at least since the release of the landmark Surgeon General's report in 1964. The Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco is a coalition of a number of groups. We represent the Chicago and State Heart Associations, the Chicago and State Lung Associations, the Illinois State Dental Society, the Illinois State Medical Society, the American Medical Association, the Diabetes Association, the Parent-Teachers Association, and other related groups. Whom did I leave out? The State Cancer Society: the most powerful and influential voluntary health agency in America does not belong to the Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco. This gets us to a very important point: the difficulty in organizing a coalition founded on the premise that we all agree on something, and we all know where we're going. The State Cancer

Society doesn't work on its own, of course, and its absence from the Coalition weakens the effort against the tobacco problems.

For example, to get laws passed to make cigarettes unavailable to minors is a direct contradiction to what the tobacco industry is trying to do. The tobacco companies don't want the minimum-age laws enforced, because they know that almost all new smokers come from the ranks of teenagers who replace the 1,200 smokers who die each day in the United States. Effectively taking on this \$55 billion-a-year industry in the political trenches in Springfield and elsewhere requires a cooperative, unified effort. Having the Cancer Society go its own way due to non-productive in-fighting among health groups obviously makes this task more difficult.

The tobacco industry is perpetrating an immense immorality by spreading tobacco products all over the world. We even have to go to Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, and China to try to counter what the American tobacco industry is doing, because finally we are beginning to win the battle here at home through the political process. And that's what lobbying in the context of a coalition member is all about, both at the state and the federal levels. The United States Congress has proved not to be the fastest-acting legislative body in the world on the tobacco and health issue, even though it involves a product that kills hundreds of thousands of people each year in this country, and that has made the victories at the local and state levels that much more significant.

You've all seen the statistics. More people die directly from smoking cigarettes than the combination of those killed by auto accidents, AIDS, alcohol, murders, suicides, fires, heroin, and cocaine. And, despite that fact, the United States Congress moves very slowly. What happened at the Republic National Convention and the Democratic National Convention? Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis Sullivan, drove himself batty at the Republican Convention trying to point out that the tobacco manufacturers were running more breakfasts and more dinners, while giving out more money at the convention than any other single lobbying or interest group at that event. They were at the Democratic convention, too, by the way, but not as in great abundance for reasons that I and Jim might disagree about. We sat in the Illinois legislature on opposite sides of the aisle. I consider myself to be a liberal Democrat, and frankly, in that context, it is easier to take on these public interest, do-good causes. What I am saying is that to lobby on behalf of a single-issue interest group that is opposed to the perpetuation of an evil is a heart-rending experience.

The people on the other side are only concerned with money and business. As only can happen in our great democracy, the rights of the individual are pursued to the exclusion of the health and welfare of everybody else in the room. We are always in danger of losing. We are in danger today because the political clout that we once had is waning. The Lung Association is starting to worry about TB again and therefore, our coalition is weakened.

We have people who agree with us but who are not helping with the cause. The Illinois Coalition Against Tobacco has had some success, but we have to keep up the fight.

Ann Irving (*Citizens Utility Board*):

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) was created to represent the interests of small business and residential utility rate-payers in the state of Illinois. It is a very focused organization. Most of our staff time and our budget is devoted to opposing and litigating rate cases in front of the state regulatory body, the Illinois Commerce Commission, and when necessary, in the courts. We also have full-time lobbyists, and we lobby at the state level in the interest of the utility rate-payers. And we also provide counseling for individuals, members and non-members alike, who have specific personal problems with utilities.

We were created in a rather unique way, through a state-wide movement that put a referendum on the county ballots in 1983. Essentially, the question was "do you think there should be an organization that will represent the interests of the utility rate payers?" The response was an overwhelmingly "yes." Although the referendum was not binding, the state legislature formed the Citizens Utility Board. There is actually a CUB section in the Public Utilities Act in Illinois.

The act created a specific structure for the organization. It has provided for a board to be elected by members on the basis of congressional districts in Illinois. So we currently have a 22 member board, which will change soon. At the same time, we were given this mission and no funding. We were to be membership-funded, and we were at that time given the ability to put membership inserts in utility mailings, so that when people received their utility bills, they also got a request to join an organization that would advocate against the utilities. The utilities then appealed to the Supreme Court and won, arguing that they should not have to advocate against themselves. So we now have the ability to piggy-back on to state mailings. Again, the recognition being is we represent the interest of all the utility rate-payers, and increasing the membership base means that current members of the organization have to provide fewer funds to do our work. We have about 150,000 members state wide. Currently we have a staff of 10 people and a board of 22 people. The staff executive director is hired by the board, and the staff executive hires the staff. We have a very active membership, and my job as an organizer is to involve the membership in both the rate cases and also in legislative organizing. We are continuing to grow in our membership base. We hope to do more educational and informational work particularly in the area of conservation.

Aida Giachello (*University of Illinois, South West Community Congress*):

I was asked to speak about one of the many organizations that I am involved with at the grassroots level. I decided to speak about the Southwest Community Congress (SWCC). For those of you who are not from Chicago, the SWCC is located in the southwest side of the city of Chicago. Our area is bounded to the west by Midway Airport, to the south by Ford City Shopping Center, to the east, Ashland Avenue, and to the north, 47th Street. I got involved in the SWCC because I live in the neighborhood, and I wanted to be actively involved in all the issues affecting the community. Despite the fact that I belong to many national and local organizations, it is most rewarding to be involved in a local organization with a very broad base. We have business people, bankers, leaders of block clubs, church representatives, and other community organizations.

The SWCC organization has been around since 1969. We were operating in the basement of a church group in the neighborhood until 1987, and when I became the President, I was able to get additional money and better space. We don't have a fax machine yet, and we just recently got a computer. We are really operating with very limited resources, with a budget of less than \$100,000, and four full-time staff. Most of the work is done through volunteers and effective organization. We have about 186 member organizations. We have an executive board consisting of 19 representatives of the membership.

We work on different critical community issues. We primarily target areas dealing with education, health care, housing, economic development, and youth leadership development. The organization has an annual meeting with the entire membership. And there we submit resolutions, modify the constitution, and set priorities for the following year. Every month, we have what we call "Senate Meetings," where all of the representatives of organizations come together. Policy decisions are made there, and we keep the members up to date about what we are doing. The information that we share is very valuable; it is interesting to see how community grassroots residents can define their problems and come up with solutions that are both meaningful and effective.

Let me highlight a couple of things. We were able to establish a new organization against racial violence. We originally came together because that area of the city has been known for racial difficulties, with a whole history of segregation and abuse. Martin Luther King was there in the 1960s marching against racism. One of the purposes of our organization was to deal with racial violence and tension as the community composition began to change. Currently, there is an increasing number of other racial and ethnic groups such as Hispanics, Blacks, Arabs, moving in. Our mission is to try and bring them together and minimize the prejudice traditionally found in the community. Also, we have been instrumental in getting Midway Airport open

to traffic and thus creating economic opportunities for our residents. We have been involved in creating a pre-purchasing counseling program for people who want to buy homes there.

If you are really serious in conducting research activities at the local level, you must begin by going where the action is--that is, getting involved in grassroots organizations, where not only will you be able to learn more about these kinds of issues, but how they are solved. You will also have the opportunity to share your own expertise and knowledge with your neighbors.