

Editor's Introduction

It is early 2017, and the consequences for racial and ethnic minorities in the United States and Europe are more dire than now than in recent decades. Trump began his presidency with an “America First” inaugural address marking a new era of protectionism and muscular nationalism (Fisher 2017) and a rapid series of executive orders taking aim at blocking refugees from Muslim-majority countries, building a border wall with Mexico, ramping up interior immigration enforcement and urban law enforcement, and pushing for the development of the Dakota Access Pipeline despite opposition from many Native American groups. At the same time, hate incidents in the United States continue unabated, with desecration of Jewish synagogues and cemeteries (Kaplan 2017; Epstein 2017), the murder of an Indian immigrant engineer in Kansas (Mishra 2017; Stack 2017), and a continued rise in hate incidents against Muslims (Koeske 2017). Indeed, the Southern Poverty Law Center has reported a tripling in the number of hate groups across the United States in 2016, with new anti-Muslim organizations accounting for much of the increase (Hausloner 2017). Finally, nationalist candidates such as Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Marine Le Pen in France are faring much better than expected in their respective bids for power, pointing to continued momentum for white nationalism in Europe as in the United States.

While it may take a several years for scholars to more fully comprehend the causes and consequences of this rapid ascent in nativism and white nationalism, it is already quite apparent that our understandings of race and political behavior need to pay far greater attention to political institutions and elites than they have in the past. This includes not only the study of political formations such as the Tea Party movement within the Republican party and the development of an immigrant rights movement infrastructure, but also the ascent of particular elites such as Stephen Bannon, Kris Kobach, and Jeff Sessions who have found ways to skillfully navigate and harness the power of news media, movement organizations, and government institutions to shape public opinion and produce policy change.

In the meantime, there is a lot of new ground being plowed in the study of racial and ethnic politics. Several of the articles in this issue touch upon public attitudes related to race and immigration, and in ways that have been relatively understudied. For example, Marisa Abrajano, Zoltan Hajnal, and Hans Hassell provide one of the few studies to date that ties media framing on immigration to large-scale shifts in public opinion. They find that news coverage, even in a source as mainstream as *The New York Times* tends to frame immigration in a negative light. News coverage has also tended to focus on undocumented immigration and Latinos, even through the last decade marked by precipitous declines in Mexican migration and significant increases in Asian migration. Importantly, the authors also find that shifts in white partisanship—away from Democrats and towards the Republican party—are closely linked to news coverage of Latino immigrants but not of Asian immigrants. Edward Vargas, Gabriel Sanchez, and Juan Valdez examine another aspect of immigration and public opinion that is relatively understudied: the possible effects of state-level immigration policies on the sense of linked fate among Latinos. State-level laws have been an important part of the immigration policy landscape since 2005, and Vargas and colleagues find that restrictive policies on immigration lead to a heightened sense of linked fate among Latinos. The authors hypothesize that a sense of political threat is the likely mechanism for this increase in linked fate, paving the way for future studies to link policy threats at the macro level to perceptions of threat at the individual level.

While racialized attitudes on immigration have been the subject of several studies in recent years, a prior generation of scholarship examined racialized attitudes in relation to welfare policies. Timothy Callaghan and Adam Olson build on this prior generation of research by extending the analysis to the “hidden welfare state,” which refers to policies like tax credits and subsidies that are less visible than traditional welfare policies like food stamps and health insurance. The authors focus on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which enjoys broad political support among legislators but is less well known among the public. They find that EITC, too, can be vulnerable to the same kind of racializing rhetoric that diminished support for traditional welfare policies, with significant declines in support among respondents who are exposed to information suggesting that African Americans disproportionately benefit from the policy. Thus, while unearthing certain policies of the hidden welfare state such as tax subsidies for the wealthy may lead to more progressive economic policies, the authors caution that unearthing policies such

as EITC run the risk of driving down public support for policies that disproportionately benefit low-income Americans.

Finally, this issue contains two articles from very different contexts—sub-Saharan Africa and the United States—that have significant implications in how we measure and conduct studies related to racial and ethnic politics. First, Dominic Burbidge and Nic Cheeseman examine the salience of ethnicity in facilitating or hindering individual-level trust, using a series of “trust games” that manipulate the kind of information that is revealed to participants. Importantly, the authors find that the political history of a country matters in shaping trusting relationships. In a country such as Kenya, where ethnicity has played a strong role in state development, interpersonal trust is generally lower than in Tanzania, where the state has sought to diminish the importance of ethnicity in terms of access to public resources. At the same time, revealing information about the ethnicity of other participants leads to stronger trusting relationships in Kenya, but not in Tanzania. Thus, contrary to what many would argue, the relationship between ethnicity, ethnic diversity, and trust is not universal, and the kinds of methodological innovations that Burbidge and Cheeseman advance here may help improve studies of racial and ethnic politics across various state contexts in the United States.

This issue also contains a research note by Paru Shah and Nicholas Davis that should prove valuable to scholars interested in the race and ethnicity of political elites such as candidates and elected officials. Shah and Davis note that studies of ethnic candidates are rare for state and local offices because of the high cost (both in time and resources) associated with hand-coding each candidate based on publicly available information such as the candidate biographies, photos, websites, and news coverage. The authors evaluate the cost-effectiveness of these expert evaluations of candidate race/ethnicity against two alternative methods: the first relies on Bayesian analysis of racial/ethnic surname lists and census population distributions within the geographic area, and the other relies on crowd-sourcing evaluations by undergraduate students spending much less time on classification than expert reviewers would. The authors find that these alternative methods provide classifications that are relatively close to expert evaluations in case of white and Latino candidates, but need further improvement when considering African American and Asian candidates. Overall, the authors' findings and recommendations should help increase (and improve) studies of candidate race and ethnicity not only in the United States, but also in other countries.

Finally, in addition to several reviews of recent books in racial and ethnic politics, our journal provides a bridge between the worlds of academia, politics, and policy with our Q&A feature. In this issue, we interview Erik Stegman, executive director of Center for Native American Youth (CNAV) at the Aspen Institute and a long-established voice on policies affecting Native Americans in the United States. We discuss the ways in which Native American voices and concerns have been addressed by the federal government in recent decades, with notable progress under the Obama administration but also significant challenges that remain. We also discuss the importance of civic engagement and coalition building for Native Americans, and ways that the academic community can help advance the visibility and inclusion of Native Americans in social science and policy research.

SOURCES

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