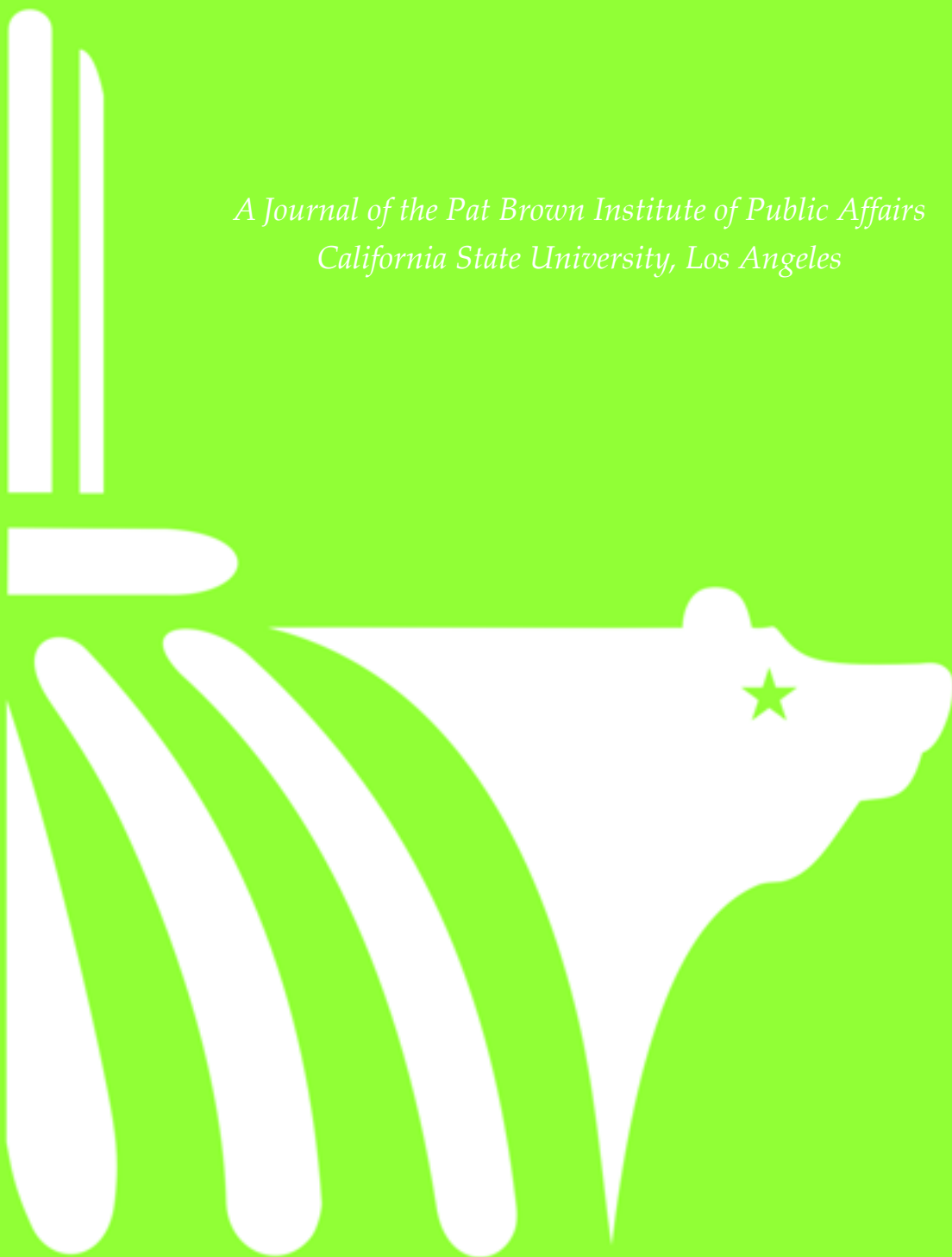


CALIFORNIA POLITICS & POLICY

*A Journal of the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs
California State University, Los Angeles*



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CALIFORNIA'S STATE LEGISLATORS: Healthy Representation, Healthy Women

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ABSTRACT

The vital role of women in elected office is substantiated by research that finds the representation of women's "interests" requires a greater inclusion of women leaders in public office. As the ideological composition of women in office changes due to increases in Republican office-holders, research focusing on the representation of 'women's issues' must be attentive to the changing definitions of women's issues and women serving in office generally. For example, there is evidence that in states with higher percentages of women, legislatures are more attentive to women's health issues. However, these studies typically include abortion policy as a prominent "woman's health issue." This is problematic for obvious reasons including the growing ideological diversity of women who serve in public office and the moral dimensions of abortion. Using policy sponsorship in California's legislature we explore how well the new guard of women legislators in California serve the interests of all women. We find that women do provide the greatest representation of women, but that party plays an intermediary role that must be considered when evaluating gender and policy.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1990s, women made great strides in legislative elections both nationally and statewide. California followed the trend, significantly increasing the number and percentage of women serving in both the state and national legislatures. These changes in California's legislature provide fertile ground for exploring the role of women in California's legislature in terms of "descriptive representation." This perspective contends that legislatures largely dominated by men do not substantively provide for the needs of women. The election of women to California's legislature offers them an opportunity to raise concerns unique to women and to pose alternative perspectives, both on issues traditionally associated with women and in areas more typically considered gender neutral, but which may impact women and men differently, such as tax policy and foreign aid.

Currently, a record number of women serve in elected office at the state and national levels. In 2006, 24.8% of state elective executive office holders, 22.7% of state legislators

(Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), 2007) and 29.7% of top appointed policymakers in the states were women (Center for Women in Government and Civil Society (CWGCS), 2006). California presents a unique opportunity to explore the role of women in the state legislature. Since the 1992 "Year of the Woman," California has steadily increased its representation of women in the state legislature from just over 18% to nearly 31% in 2005 (CAWP, 2007). Its ranking in the United States for representation of women increased from a low of 26th in 1993 to 6th in 2003; today, California is ranked 12th in the nation in terms of women in elected office (CAWP, 2006). Moreover, in the same period, several legislative groups formed to help promote the needs of women. Nationally, over the past 15 years, state legislatures, which were traditionally dominated by the Democratic Party, experienced significant gains in representation of both male and female Republicans. Therefore, while the number of women has risen in state legislatures, an increasing ideological gap among women is evident, as Republican women in state houses tend to be more conservative than Democratic women.

As the ideological composition of women policy makers changes, research focusing on the representation of "women's issues" must recognize the changing character of women's needs and women serving in office, generally. For example, there is evidence that in states with higher percentages of women, legislatures are more attentive to women's health issues. However, these studies typically include abortion policy as a prominent woman's health issue. The emphasis on abortion is problematic for several reasons: First is the moral dimension of the abortion debate, which often results in symbolic rather than substantive abortion policy (see Berkman & O'Connor, 1993); furthermore, the growing ideological diversity of women who serve in public office makes assumptions regarding women's positions on abortion problematic. To conservative women, abortion may be a "feminist" issue, not a health issue. For these reasons, a more thorough analysis of health legislation, including the differences in the content of bills sponsored by women and men legislators, is an important addition to our understanding of the unique value that women state legislators offer their constituents.

The conceptualization of "support for women's issues" emerged from Hanna Pitkin's (1967) substantive representation (acting for) rather than mere descriptive representation (standing for). Descriptive representation offers no promise that women will act on behalf of women; this study explores whether women's presence in a state legislature presents substantive opportunities to represent women in the area of health policy through bill sponsorship.

We use bill sponsorship to measure support for health care, and more specifically, women's health care. Only a small percentage of bills come up for a floor vote; therefore, in the absence of roll-call votes, sponsorship is a good proxy. As Swers & Caiazza (2000, p. 1) observed in their research on women in the U.S. Congress, "Bill sponsorship is a good indicator of which members of Congress are trying to bring women's issues to the national agenda because, while members sponsor bills for a variety of reasons, they have complete control over the number and the content of the bills they sponsor." Moreover, many health measures are considered in floor debates alongside other policy issues, including occupa-

tional safety, prison reform, and school safety. A floor vote may not indicate preference or support for health concerns specifically, but rather support for party platform or other issues surrounding the policy.

There are, however, a few caveats to the sponsorship model. David Mayhew (1974) suggested that perhaps members use sponsorship as a position-taking strategy to send cues to voters, partisans, and other members. Position taking reflects a legislator's willingness to support a bill regardless of its prospects for passage (and oftentimes due to its perceived demise) to further the goal of reelection. Recent scholarship shows that sponsorship is a reflection of legislator preference and not merely symbolic posturing (see, for example, Krehbiel, 1995; Kessler & Krehbiel, 1996). Krehbiel's study on the cosponsors of the A-to-Z Spending Plan of the 103rd Congress suggested that sponsorship and cosponsorship may be interpreted similarly to roll-call voting: Members' sponsorship behavior reflects preference. In his study, preference accounted for nearly 65% of the variation in cosponsorship (p. 910). "In contrast to the position-taking view, then cosponsorship is determined not by abstract position but rather by concrete (though possibly uncertain) effects" (p. 910).

We explore the intersection of gender and political party in legislative sponsorship of bills related to health concerns with a particular emphasis on women's health. The patterns of legislative sponsorship of health bills in California are likely indicative of patterns in other states with high numbers of women in the legislature.

WOMEN LEGISLATORS, WOMEN'S LEGISLATION

Scholarship indicates that women legislators prioritize and sponsor policy issues differently than men, but many of these studies were completed during a period when fewer women were serving in state legislatures. Moreover, the existing literature on state variations in health policy focuses on Medicaid spending and services, and only varyingly includes political variables. While there is a general sense that politics matters in health policy, and that women policymakers are particularly interested in health care, to date, few have considered the specific ways in which women legislators influence the types of health concerns most important to women in state legislatures. This research fills in these gaps by exploring the sponsorship behavior of women and men by party in the area of health care.

Research in representation has found that members of traditionally marginalized groups represent group interests beyond the extent motivated by constituency and party pressures (Saint-Germain, 1989; Bratton & Haynie, 1999; Bratton, 2005). Women have been found to represent women's interest to an even greater extent when in states with the highest percentages of female representatives (Thomas, 1991). Women state legislators demonstrate differing legislative priorities and approaches to research and sponsorship of bills than men (Thomas, 1997; Kathlene, 2001); however, the evidence is somewhat mixed on whether or not health care is among the priorities of women legislators. Most scholars have found that women were more likely to sponsor and prioritize bills regarding public

health (Saint-Germain, 1989; Reingold, 2000; in national politics, see Swers, 1998; Swers, 2002; Burrell, 1994) and the provision and regulation of health care (Carroll, 2001). However, Thomas and Welch (1991), Welch and Thomas (1991), and Thomas (1994) found that women did not place health among their personal priorities, and Thomas and Welch (2001) reported that women were *less likely* to prioritize legislation on welfare, education, and health.

Partisanship plays a significant role in legislative decision making as well. Bratton (2002) found that increases in gender diversity in the Republican Party are associated with a lower number of women's interest measures introduced by both male and female Republican state legislators (p. 128). Additionally, Bratton found that ideology plays an important role. Increases in Republican women in state legislatures may increase measures that are contrary to women's interests (p. 133). However, Poggione's research (2004) on the impact of gender on support for welfare policy indicated that Conservative women are actually far less conservative with respect to welfare policy than their male counterparts (p. 312). Reingold (1992) and Dodson (2001)¹ found that women legislators—even those who self-identify as “non-feminists”—are more likely to *act for* women's issues than are men and that “increased descriptive representation will lead to improvements in substantive representation of women consistent with the goals of the women's movement” (Dodson, 2001, p. 235).

WOMEN'S HEALTH: A CAUSE FOR CONCERN

State-level concern over women's health is a relatively recent development, beginning in 1992 when Illinois designated a staff member in the Department of Public Health to oversee women's health issues. Today, 18 states, including California, have offices devoted to women's health issues, which serve a variety of functions, including policy guidance for elected and appointed officials and the collection and dissemination of data and information on concerns specific to women's health (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005).

Although it is a universal issue, health care affects women more and differently than it affects men. For example, while women are more likely to seek medical attention and live longer, they are less likely to hold jobs that offer private health insurance (33% of women, 53% of men), their healthcare is more costly, and they pay more out of pocket than men (Conway, Ahern, & Steuernagel, 2005). In fact, women are least likely to be insured when under the age of 30—during which time 70% of all births in the United States occur (Baird, 1998). These factors taken together mean that women are more reliant on public health services, including Medicaid and Medicare, than men.

On health outcomes, women are often at a disadvantage. Women are more likely than men to see a doctor and are more likely to suffer from a host of illnesses, particularly those related to aging because women live longer than men (Conway et al., 2005; Weisman, 1998). In addition, female health has been compromised through women's historic underrepresentation among both physicians and policy makers and their exclusion from

research on health, disease, and clinical drugs (Baird, 1998; Weisman, 1998; Conway et al., 2005; and SWHR's "The 10 Q report: Advancing women's heart health through improved research, diagnosis and treatment").

Finally, women are far more likely than men to be caregivers, both informally and formally. Women are 72% of the informal caregivers for the elderly and children in the United States and hold 75% of all health professions jobs; they are, however, disproportionately represented in the lowest paid sector of these professions (Conway, et al., 2005). None of these constitutes trivial differences. As Conway and colleagues (2005) explained, "Changes in health policy do not affect men and women equally, and viewing health care questions as gender neutral unfairly penalizes women" (p. 49).

State governments have a great deal of influence over health care spending and health policy, even in the federally mandated Medicaid program (Schneider, 1988; Palley, 1997). Studies have confirmed the value of higher state spending both for access to public health services (Fisher et al., 2003; Long & Marquis, 1998; Hadley & Cunningham, 2004; Huber, Pote, & Dayhoff, 1994) and better health outcomes for those served; in particular, for prenatal care, infant mortality, and low birth-weight infants (Long & Marquis, 1998; Mayer & Sarin, 2004; Morgan & LaPlant, 1996²).

While states vary in their health care spending, the economic, demographic and political reasons for that variance are only now beginning to be understood. For example, Frost, Frohwirth, and Purcell (2004) noted that more than five million women receive contraceptive services in public health clinics and that the wide variance in clinic funding is "often dependent on political mood and the financial well-being of state and local governments" (p. 206). A review of the research to date shows that most studies use some variation on Medicaid spending or services to address the variation in public health spending. Scholars have found that recipient demand (Schneider, 1988; Barilleaux & Miller, 1988; Grogan, 1994; Kane, Kane, Ladd, & Nielsen, 1998) and Medicaid administration are important factors in state spending decisions (Schneider, 1988; Barilleaux & Miller, 1988); that strong medical industry interest group presence increases state spending (Barrilleaux & Miller, 1988; Kousser, 2002; Camobreco, 1996; Grogan, 1994); that liberal state-level ideology increases spending and expands eligibility (Barrilleaux & Miller, 1988; Camobreco, 1996); that political variables, such as the ideology of politicians (Grogan, 1994), and Democratic Party control of state legislatures positively affect state Medicaid spending (Tolbert & Steuernagel, 2001; Kousser, 2002); and that state resources and federal spending increase state and local health spending (Morgan & LaPlant, 1996) and state spending on alcohol treatment programs (Huber et al., 1994). Economic factors, on the other hand, have been found to positively impact state spending on long-term medical care in only some cases, leaving Kane and colleagues (1998) to surmise that political factors have likely shaped state policy on long-term care.

CALIFORNIA: A WARM CLIMATE FOR HEALTH POLICY

We expect that women legislators in California, both Democratic and Republican, will be more likely to introduce legislation on health, especially women's health issues, than

will men because of women's heavy involvement in family health care. In addition, based on the literature on political party and health policy, we expect that Democrats will be more likely than Republicans, to sponsor legislation related to health care generally.

California has four important legislative characteristics that, according to the literature, would likely facilitate sponsorship of bills related to health, in particular women's health. First, California has a high percentage of women legislators. It was one of only 16 states with female legislative membership above 25% in 2006. The trend in California over the time period studied here has reflected a fairly steady increase in women's representation from 1993, when 22.5% of California legislators were women, to 2006, when women comprised 30.8% of the California State Legislature (CAWP, 2006).

The second characteristic likely to increase sponsorship of women's health bills is the existence of an active women's caucus. There are currently 31 women from both the Assembly and the Senate associated with California's Legislative Women's Caucus. The 12 Democratic women in the Senate are members of the Caucus, as are 19 Democratic Assemblywomen. The 6 Republican women in the Assembly are not members of the Caucus.

A third characteristic that would facilitate sponsorship of women's health legislation is the existence of a state office devoted to women's health. California's statewide office was among the first in the nation, created in 1993 when the California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research (CEWAER) produced reports on the status of women's health, which led to the creation of the state's Office of Women's Health (OWH). In 1994, this office was permanently established in statute, Chapter 760, 1994 (Health and Safety Code Section 135-138.5). The mission of the OWH is to guide "women's health policy in an effective and comprehensive fashion to promote health and reduce the burden of preventable disease and injury among the women and girls of California." (California Department of Health Services, Office of Women's Health, 2007).

Finally, the political party makeup of the California legislature should be favorable for sponsorship of women's health legislation. Between 1992 and September 2006, 61% of California's state legislators were Democrats. In addition, far more women in the legislature were Democrats than Republicans; over this 10-year period, 84.6% of women legislators were Democrats, while only 15.4% of women were Republicans. As Figure 1 illustrates, Democratic women have increased their presence in California's legislature; Republican women disappeared from the state Senate by 2001 and have seen only modest increases in representation in the Assembly since 2002.

DATA AND METHODS

Our analysis uses a dataset of bill sponsorship in the California legislature to examine the role of both gender and political party in the sponsorship of bills related to health policy. The data for this project include all proposed legislation, each bill's primary legislative author, and the party and gender of each sponsor. The data include bills for the period 1993 through September 2006 and were gathered from the California Legislative Web site (<http://www.assembly.ca.gov/acs/acsframeset2text.htm>). The health bills we explored were

coded according to their substantive content and not based on their committee assignments or proposed chapter in the California Code. We suspect that women will be active in sponsoring health legislation in general.

To more fully explore the nuances in health bills, we separated the initial dataset into five categories: (1) women's, (2) children's, (3) men's, (4) senior, and (5) general health. These bills range from, but are not limited to, funds established to promote research, awareness and preventative care of disease, funding for trauma centers and public hospitals, and mandates on health providers. Following Tolbert and Steuernagel (2001), we coded as "women's health bills" those that pertained to the following health concerns: (1) breast cancer; (2) cervical cancer; (3) obstetrics-gynecology; (4) contraceptives; (5) assisted reproductive technology; (6) maternity; (7) mastectomy; (8) reconstructive breast surgery following mastectomy; and (8) osteoporosis (see appendix for complete list).

Women's health care included those bills that addressed issues of disease, preventative care, regulation of medical industry, education and awareness campaigns for illnesses associated with women's reproductive systems, prenatal care, pregnancy, osteoporosis, and breast cancer. For example, AB 38 is a 1997 bill that prohibits health and insurance plans that provide maternity coverage from "restricting benefits for inpatient hospital care to a time period less than 48 hours following a normal vaginal delivery and less than 96 hours following a delivery by caesarean section." We included family planning services with women's health, but coded family health measures (largely directed at children) under "children's health." Because we are discerning whether women make a substantive impact on the policy agenda and resulting policy, we coded family health measures as "children's health" because they always involve issues broader than women's health, even though women are typically the primary caretakers. Children's health bills were those that addressed health issues of infants and children, teens, or minors and included educational awareness campaigns, flu vaccinations, medical coverage, family health insurance, dental exams, and so forth. "Senior health" and "men's health" were coded in a similar fashion and included those covering diseases associated with the older population, including Alzheimer's disease and Medicare issues, among others. Men's health care bills consisted of bills addressing the specific needs of men, including prostate cancer and those issues specifically identifying men's health. The remaining healthcare bills, coded as "general," addressed issues of podiatry, dentistry and orthodontics, ophthalmology, heart disease, and a variety of diseases that affect the population at large.

Bills that provided overlap were coded as closely as possible to the overall sense of the bill as discerned through the language of the bill. For example, several bills were proposed to address osteoporosis and were coded according to the gender-rich or gender-neutral language of the sponsor; gender-neutral terms were coded as "senior," and gender-rich terms were coded as "women's health."

We used the percentage of bills sponsored in a given area rather than total number to accommodate for the uneven distribution of males and females, as well as the distribution

of male and female Democrats and Republicans. Women comprised an average of 25% of the legislature (and fewer in the earlier years of the period under review), so sheer numbers would not likely capture their attention toward a policy issue.

There are some limitations in this approach. For example, as we have stated, some of the issues present overlapping concerns. Issues of prenatal care and pregnancy pose important concerns for children once they are born, but they are also important women's health concerns pre-delivery. We have omitted issues regarding abortion altogether, as previously discussed. We are trying to discern whether patterns among gender and party are evident, and issues of abortion complicate this investigation.

CALIFORNIA'S HEALTH SERVICES

To better understand how California compares nationally, Table 1 details some of the important health concerns currently facing the states. California performed fairly well compared with the 49 other states in the union, despite having the largest and most diverse population in the nation, as well as the largest number of immigrants. California spent \$322,367³ on contraceptive services, which includes Medicaid, Title IX and its own monies during the fiscal year 2001 (see Table 1). California's total was \$161 per woman in need, while the national average was only \$66. California women were underinsured compared with those in the rest of the country (23% compared with 18.4%), but the percentage of those who benefited from publicly funded family planning services was greater in California than the average of the 49 states. The figures regarding the percentage of women who received cancer screenings for various cancers was also comparable to those of the other 49 states. However, California lagged behind the nation in breast cancer screenings, with only 60% of women receiving a mammogram compared with over 75% of women on average. The figures for California's children are staggering, as over 1.5 million children in California lived without health insurance (15% compared with roughly 11% in other states).

On men's health issues, according to the 2001 data, California was nearly identical to other states. However, as the literature indicated, men were less likely to attend to their medical conditions in a timely manner, and not surprisingly, the percentage of men seeking and receiving attention for health issues was distinctly lower than the percentage of women receiving health care. Finally, according to our analysis, the prospects for legislative attention are enormous in California; not only are her children at risk, but the general population as well. Fully 19% of people living in California are without health insurance, the average for the fifty states is under 13% (see Table 1).

CALIFORNIA'S LEGISLATORS AND HEALTH BILLS

We analyzed the legislative content of all health-related bills sponsored between 1993 and September of 2006 to discern the differences among men and women Democratic and Republican legislators who participated in health bill sponsorship. There

were nearly 40,000 bills proposed during this time, and of these, 840 pertained to health and health care in general. Of the health care bills in the data, 38% addressed general health care needs, 28% addressed children's health needs, 18% addressed women's health care, 10% addressed men's health needs, and 6% addressed the needs of seniors.

Figure 2 illustrates the sponsorship patterns among male and female legislators. Of the nearly 40,000 pieces of legislation in our dataset, men sponsored 29,724 (74.3%) and women sponsored 10,234 (25.6%) of the total. With regard to health bills, 3.84% of those sponsored by women were related to health compared with just 1.5% of all bills sponsored by men. Notably, during the period under review, women comprised only 25% of the legislature but sponsored nearly half of the health care bills, sponsoring 393 of the 840 health bills, which indicates that women sponsor a higher percentage of health care bills than men. While it is clear that women take the lead in sponsorship of health care legislation, we move beyond that finding to discern variation in the *types of bills* sponsored by women and men.

From 1993 to 2006, women sponsored 105 (70%) women's health care bills, while men sponsored 45. It is interesting to note that although the percentage of women's health bills sponsored by women is significantly higher than the percentage of women's health bills sponsored by men, a higher percentage of the health bills sponsored by men relate to men's health. Men also sponsored a higher percentage of general health bills than women.

To more fully explore the differences among legislators, we broke down our analysis by gender and party. Table 3 illustrates bill sponsorship of California's legislators by party and gender. During the period under review, 428 women served in the state legislature; however, of these, 358 of the female legislators were Democrats, while only 70 were Republican. As expected, across the seven legislative sessions under review, Democrats and women tended to sponsor health related bills most often. Of the 840 health-related bills, 654 (78%) were sponsored by Democrats and 361 (43%), by Democratic women (see Figure 2).⁴

Our dataset allowed us to note distinct patterns in sponsorship of women's health bills. Of the 105 women's health bills sponsored by women, 98 (93.3%) were sponsored by Democratic women. As expected, we found that Democrats, in particular female Democrats, were far more likely to sponsor women's health legislation than other members of the legislature. The small number of health bills in general and women's health bills in particular sponsored by Republican women may be a result of their relatively small number in the legislature, a question we subsequently discuss.

Two key issues dominated the content of legislation related to women's health interests in California during this time. Of the 150 bills sponsored, 44 dealt with breast cancer and overall breast health, and 23 dealt with pregnancy and maternity issues. The content of legislation in these areas varied widely. For example, on breast cancer the content ranged from postal stamps and Breast Cancer Awareness Month to funding for research and health care benefits. Pregnancy- and maternity-related legislation included disability benefits, maternity benefits, and health care coverage.

In addition to women's specific health concerns, we expected women and Democratic legislators to prioritize other health concerns as well. That is indeed the finding of this research, with Democratic women sponsoring health care legislation far more often than any other group (see Figure 3).

In senior health, women sponsored 54.9% of the 51 bills presented. Democratic women have been by far the most likely sponsors of health care bills for seniors in California. Although they have constituted only 20.9% of the legislature over time, Democratic women have sponsored nearly 53% of senior health bills. Democrats sponsored 84.3% of this legislation, with Republicans sponsoring only 15.7%.

Even in the area of men's health, where only 87 bills were sponsored between 1993 and 2006, Democratic women were nearly as likely to sponsor legislation as their male Democratic colleagues. Women Democrats sponsored 36.7% of this legislation, while Democratic men sponsored 43.6%. Republican men sponsored 19.5% of men's health bills, but no Republican women sponsored a health bill of exclusive concern to men's health.

The only area of health in which Democratic women have not sponsored legislation at dramatically higher levels than their colleagues was in the general health category. Of the 312 pieces of legislation that were coded as general health, Democratic women sponsored 30.4%; their male counterparts sponsored 38.4%. Republican men sponsored 26.6% of general health bills, with Republican women sponsoring 4.4 percent (see Figure 3). Looking at women specifically to see if there are great differences between Republican and Democratic women, we created Table 4 to explore the bills by the sponsorship of each health issue according to party and gender. Here we may be able to account for the smaller number of women, and Republican women in particular. What we find in Table 4 is that Republican women, like men of both parties, are far more likely to sponsor general health bills than any other. In fact, Democratic women continue to be unique in sponsorship priorities; they are most likely to have sponsored children's health bills than any other. Again, we find that women of either party are more likely to have sponsored women's health bills than their male counterparts.

Finally, it is interesting to note the frequency with which proposed health legislation becomes law. Figure 4 illustrates the passage rate of bills sponsored by the four different groups of legislators. Over the seven legislative sessions under review, 324 of the 840 health bills became law, representing nearly 39% of all health bills sponsored. As Table 2 indicates, general health and children's health bills made up 66% of the total health bills in our review, and slightly over a third became law. There were 150 women's health related bills, of which 43% became law.

Furthermore, as Figure 4 indicates, we found that, in California, women legislators have *acted for* women. Specifically, of the 65 women's health care bills enacted into law, Democratic women sponsored 48 of them representing over 73% of women's health law. Democratic women enacted the highest percentage of senior and children's health laws as well. In every area of health law, Democrats took the lead on passing health care measures, and only in men's and general health did Democratic men's bills represent a higher percentage than Democratic women. While the numbers in Figure 4 are directly related to the num-

bers of bills authored by each group, this discussion clearly indicates that women and Democratic women specifically have shaped the health policy agenda.

Scholars have typically considered health care a “woman’s issue,” and our study of California finds that to be true primarily for *Democratic* women. Reingold (1992) and Dodson (2001) suggested that even Republican women will act for women more often than will their male counterparts; their findings hold true on health issues specific to women. Although women comprise only 15% of Republican legislators in California, they have sponsored 39% of the women’s health bills with Republican sponsorship. An interesting finding, however, is that female Republicans in the California legislature have prioritized no other areas of health policy.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS: WOMEN ACTING FOR WOMEN

This study of health bill sponsorship in the state of California has yielded both expected and unexpected findings about the intersection of gender and political party in legislative sponsorship. The key expectation that two groups, Democrats and women, are most likely to sponsor health legislation is true for our dataset. There are, however, nuances to this basic finding.

First, we have found that, as expected, Democratic women are most likely to introduce health bills in California’s legislature. Although they constituted only 20.9% of the legislature over the period of this study, Democratic women have sponsored 43% of all health-related bills. Only in the areas of men’s health and general health has another group, Democratic men, sponsored more legislation than Democratic women. Democratic women were far more likely than any other group to sponsor bills relating to women’s, children’s, and senior health. Moreover, in terms of meeting the needs of women, in the area of women’s health, certainly Democratic women in the legislature have helped shape and set the agenda.

In terms of substantive representation, California’s women have benefited from the presence of women in their legislature. While men sponsored nearly 75% of all bills during the period under review, they sponsored only 30% of all women’s health care bills. Moreover, over 75% of the women’s health bills that became law were authored by women and nearly 74%, by Democratic women. Alternatively, although women sponsored only 25% of all bills in the period under review, they sponsored over one-third of all *men’s health care* bills. Our findings follow the conclusions of Reingold (1992) and Dodson (2001),⁵ which show that women legislators are more likely to *act for* women’s issues than are men and that “increased descriptive representation will lead to improvements in substantive representation of women consistent with the goals of the women’s movement” (Dodson, 2001, p. 235).

One caution to our findings involves Republican women, who are both rare and in many ways unique in the California legislature. At the outset of this article, we set out to determine whether women in California’s legislature display substantive representation, that is, *acting for* the needs of women. What has become clear is that the phrase *women’s issues* should more accurately be identified as *Democratic women’s issues*, at least in terms of health

legislation. Two possible scenarios may explain this finding. First, it is possible that Republican women are stretched too thin with their legislative responsibilities while addressing their party's needs to devote time to legislation regarding women and, instead, rely on Democratic women to take the lead. Alternatively, Republican women may not view their role in the legislature as a means to address issues of women simply because they are women; ideology may carry more weight with them than gender. Given the overwhelming number of Democratic women to Republican women, the bottom line is that women's health care needs are being addressed in California. It is too speculative to comment on the likelihood of health policy sponsorship if the ratio of Democratic women to Republican women were reversed.

While all of this bodes well for the continued prioritization of health legislation in California, particularly women's health, there is cause for concern. According to the California Elected Women's Association for Education and Research (CEWAER 2006), in November 2006 the largest number of women to date were termed out of office, and in many of those races, no female candidate ran. The 2007 legislative session begins with a two-seat loss for women in the State Senate (now only 25%), while women continue to constitute 30% of the State Assembly. Moreover, the number of women running for office is declining in California, at both the local and state level, which means the pipeline for women's success in higher offices is narrowing. If it is true that women in office will act for women regardless of political party, the stagnation and potential decline in the progress that women have made in elective office over the past two decades is at possible risk.

Issues of health care are important to state governments, and though it is difficult to assess the full impact of women's representation on health, this piece begins to offer a fuller picture of the intersection between gender, party, and legislation in the state of California. We know quite a bit about the sponsorship of bills relating to health and more specifically women's health in California; future research must now turn to implementation of these policies to uncover how much influence women in elective office have over the health of the state.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. California Health Care Compared With 49 Other States*

	CALIFORNIA	TOTAL STATE AVG.
CONTRACEPTIVE SERVICES⁶		
Total expenditures*	\$322,367	\$19,067
State-only sources expenditures*	\$44,692	\$3,240
Public expenditure per woman in need	\$146	\$66
PUBLIC FUNDED FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES⁷		
Number of women in need (2001)	2,110,740	290,695
Uninsured women of reproductive age (2002/2003)	23.1%	18.4%
Percentage total women with late or no prenatal care	26.0%	29.5%
Percentage women served in all publicly funded clinics (2001)	48.1%	43.2%
WOMEN'S SPECIFIC HEALTH⁸		
Pap smear for 18 years and over	84.4%	86.2%
Received a pap with no usual medical care	71.4%	88.8%
Received a pap without insurance	75.4%	75.0%
Mammogram women age 40 and over	60.7%	77.9%
Received a mammogram without health insurance	39.7%	33.6%
CHILDREN'S HEALTH⁹		
Number of uninsured children	1,578,000	160,857
Percentage of children without insurance	16.2%	10.9%
MEN'S SPECIFIC HEALTH¹⁰		
Percentage men over age 50: Prostate specific antigen test	53.4%	53.5%
Men received test with no usual medical care	27.6%	25.9%
GENERAL HEALTH¹¹		
Total state expenditures on health care	\$28,130	\$4,844
People without health insurance coverage	19.0%	12.9%

(*) in thousands of dollars

Table 2. Total Health Care Bills 1992-2006

	TOTAL BILLS	TOTAL LAWS	% ENACTED
Women's Health Care	150	65	43.33%
Senior Health Care	51	26	50.98%
Children's Health Care	238	75	31.51%
General Health Care	314	118	37.58%
Men's Health Care	87	41	47.13%
All Health Care Bills	840	325	39.00%

Source: California Legislature Website

Table 3. Health Bill Sponsorship and Law by Party and Gender

	Men		Women	
	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat
Total Bills Sponsored	154	293	30	361
Total Bills Enacted into Law	49	116	11	149

Source: California Legislature Bill Information 1992-2006

Table 4. Percentage of Health Issue Bills by Gender and Party 1992-2006

	% Men		% Women	
	Republican	Democrat	Republican	Democrat
Women's Health	7.14%	11.60%	23.33%	27.15%
Senior Health	4.55%	5.46%	3.33%	7.48%
Children's Health	23.38%	29.01%	26.67%	30.19%
General Health	53.90%	40.96%	46.67%	26.32%
Men's Health	11.04%	12.97%	0.00%	8.86%

Source: California Legislature Bill Information 1992-2006

Figure 1. Percentage Women in California State Legislature 1992–2006 by and Party

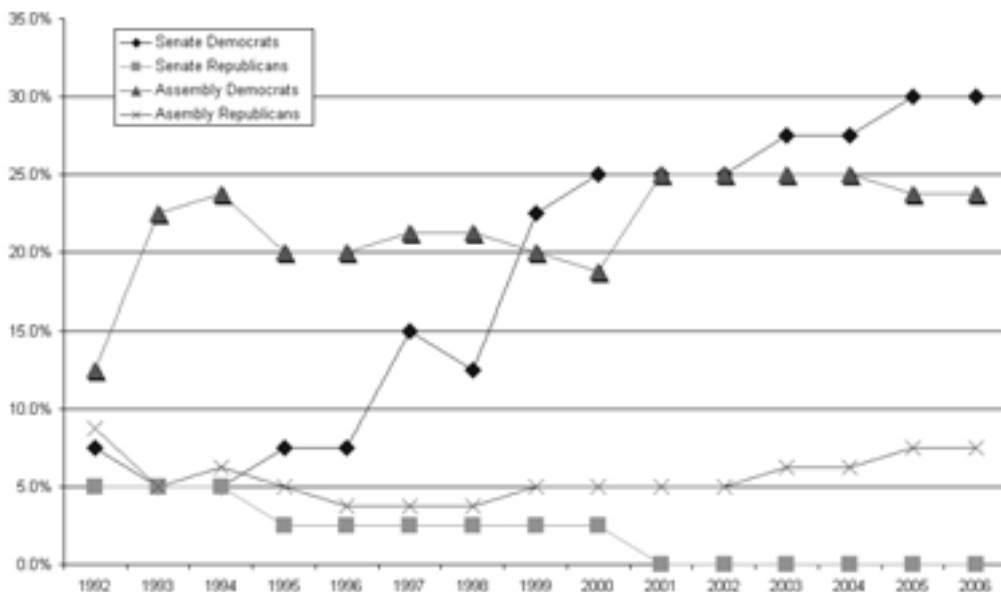


Figure 2.
Percentage of Healthcare Bills Sponsored by Type and Gender

Source: California Legislature Bill Information

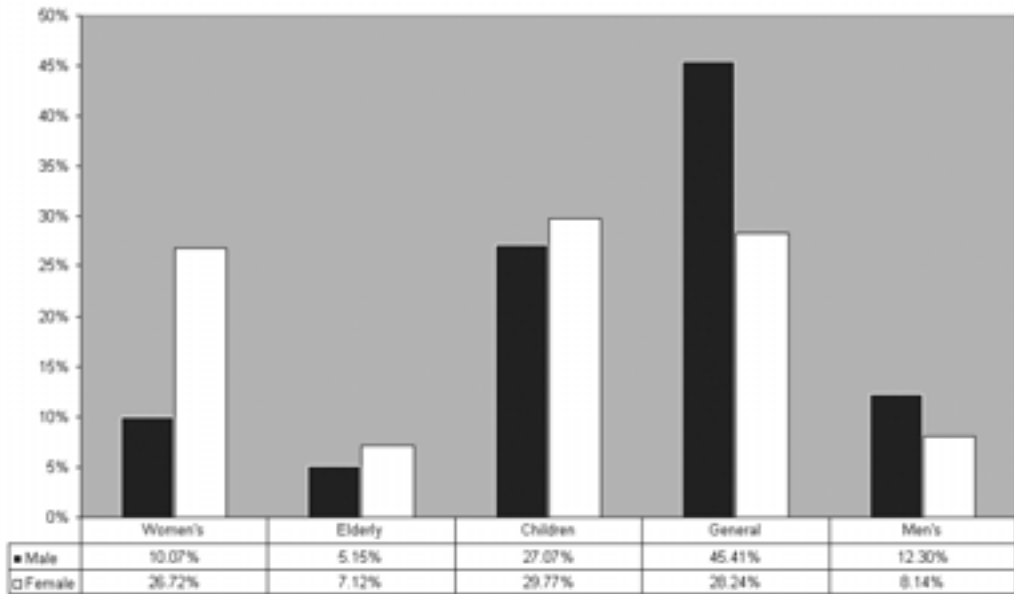


Figure 3.
Type of Healthcare Bill by Party and Gender

Source: California Legislature Bill Information

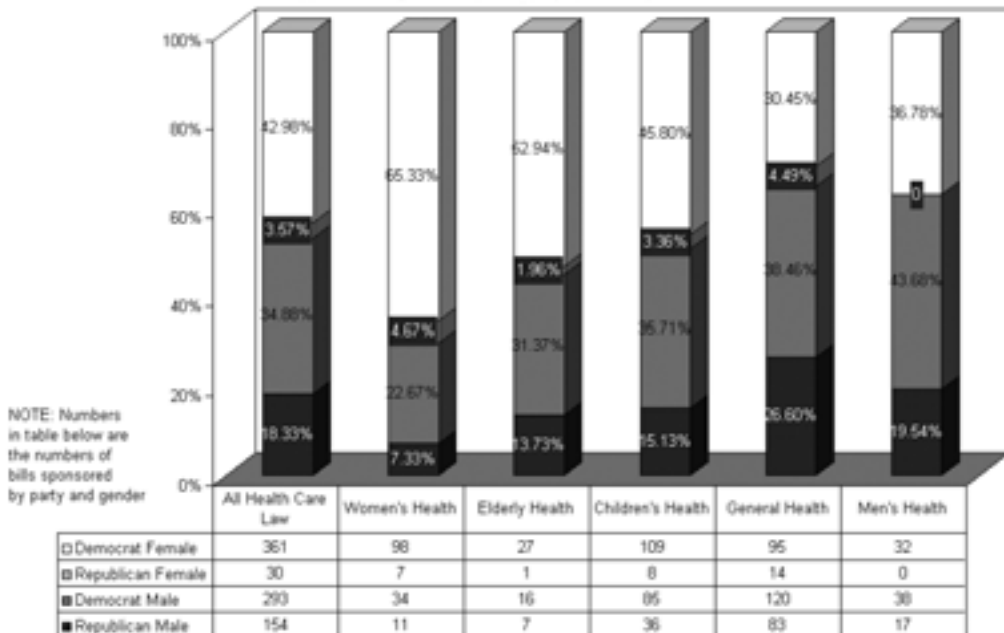
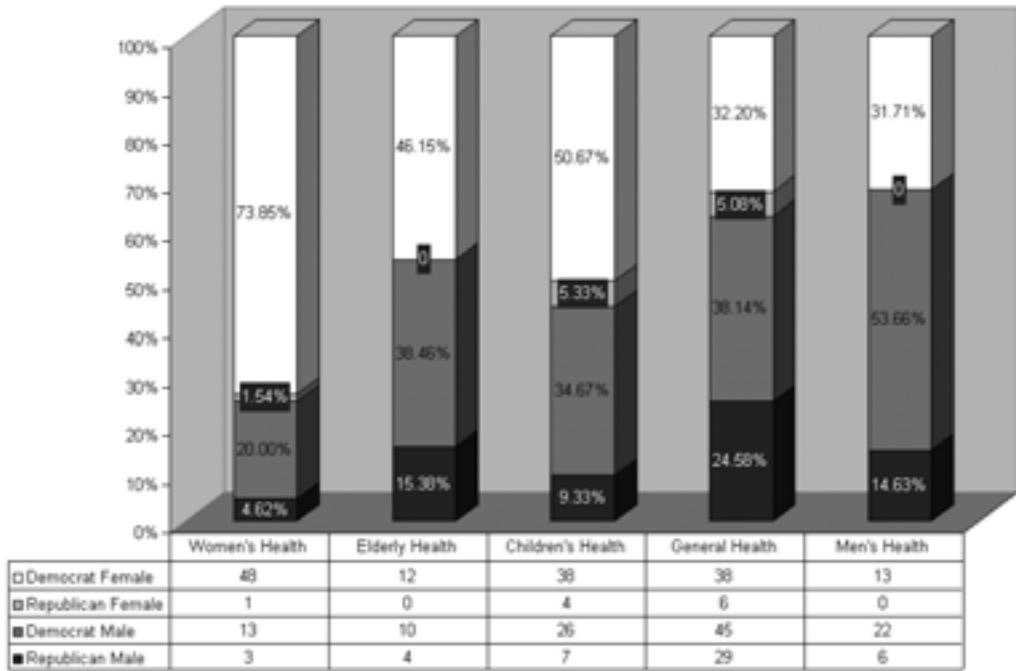


Figure 4.
Health Bills Passed into Law by Gender and Party



NOTES

- 1 See also Bratton and Haynie (1999).
- 2 The impacts of federal and state Medicaid spending on low birth-weight and infant mortality do not reach statistical significance for Morgan and LaPlant, however their model did not allow both funding streams to be combined into a single measure. Their findings leave them confident that maternal and child health spending is beneficial to health outcomes.
- 3 Figures are in thousands.
- 4 There were two Independent Party members during the period under review, but their sponsorship has been omitted.
- 5 See also Bratton and Haynie (1999).
- 6 Alan Guttmacher Institute.
- 7 Alan Guttmacher Institute.
- 8 See Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Facts and Figures 2005 from the American Cancer Society at: <http://www.cancer.org/downloads/STT/CPED2005v5PWSecured.pdf>.
- 9 Annie E. Casey Foundation: Kids Count.
- 10 See Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Facts and Figures 2005, from the American Cancer Society at: <http://www.cancer.org/downloads/STT/CPED2005v5PWSecured.pdf>.
- 11 U.S. Census Bureau.

The Election of Latinos to the California Legislature Pre- and Post-2000 Redistricting

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ABSTRACT

Two of the central questions driving this article are (1) Under what conditions are Latinos elected to the California state legislature? That is, while it is true that many Latinos are elected from majority Latino districts, many Latino legislators do not represent districts with majority Latino populations, and (2) How much does the ethnic composition of a district affect the chances that a Latino candidate will be elected in a given district? At least at the national level, very little evidence exists that Latinos are being elected from districts with white majorities. At the state level, this pattern differs, which is why it is crucial to understand the variables that contribute to Latino victories at the state level. Post-2000 redistricting created more majority-Latino districts, although the absolute number of Latino legislators did not increase correspondingly. African American legislators perform better in districts with strong pluralities of Latinos, but Latino legislators do not perform well in districts with strong pluralities of African Americans. Strongly Democratic districts are no more likely to elect Latino legislators.

The state of California has seen a rapid rise in the Latino population over the past decade. Along with this rapid rise, more Latinos have been elected to the California Legislature in recent years. This article specifies the conditions under which Latinos are elected to the California Legislature pre- and post-2000 redistricting. Policymakers in California and elsewhere should be especially concerned with the types of districts from which Latinos come and the corresponding probability of the election of Latinos to important legislative institutions.

Scholars of legislative politics have long been interested in questions of accountability, representation, and political participation (Arnold, 1990; Fenno, 1978; Lublin, 1997; Hall, 1996). Yet others have addressed such issues as they relate to racial and ethnic minorities (Swain, 1993; Lublin, 1997; Fenno, 2003; Canon, 1999; Haynie, 2001). Now that Latinos have become the largest minority group in the United States, it is all the more fitting to examine the conditions under which they are elected to legislative bodies. Although Lublin's (1997) work focuses on Congress, this article examines the legislature of one of the largest and most significant states in the United States. The considerations politicians weigh when

running for state legislatures should be similar to higher offices. In addition, state legislatures serve as fertile ground for aspirants to Congress and other higher offices. In 1990, the California legislature comprised 7 Latinos. Today, the same legislature comprises 26 Latino members in both the Assembly and Senate. Is it just the growing number of Latino voters that explains this huge increase, or are Latinos being elected from more heterogeneous districts? Are Latinos being elected from districts with substantial African American populations? This paper ascertains the extent to which the rise in Latinos serving in the California legislature can be explained by demographics as well as provides probabilities of the election of Latinos to hypothetical California districts.

LATINO POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN CALIFORNIA POLITICS

In 1990, Latinos comprised 26% of California's population. The 2000 Census reports that Latinos now number 32% of the state's population. Baldassare (2002) estimated that by the year 2040, Latinos will comprise 48% of the state's population. In an even sooner 15 years, the majority of the state's residents will be either Latino or Asian American. Latinos have been able to win leadership positions in the state. In 1998, Cruz Bustamante became the first Latino-elected Lieutenant Governor. Previously, he had served as Speaker of the Assembly along with his successor Antonio Villaraigosa, who later became Mayor of Los Angeles. Specifically, I seek to ascertain the conditions under which Latinos in California are elected to legislative districts and the differences between elections for the Assembly and the Senate in the past decade.

Especially since the 1990s, Latinos have been the target of specific ballot propositions aimed at making English the official state language and denying undocumented immigrants access to education and other health services. The impact of these draconian measures on Latino political participation and awareness has been quite substantial (Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Marcus, Neuman, & Mackuen, 2000). In California, Latinos responded to these harsh initiatives by punishing Republicans at the polls, especially former Gov. Pete Wilson, who embraced many of these initiatives. Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura (2001) demonstrated that Latinos in California responded to these initiatives by mobilizing and coalescing to elect legislators who they did not perceive as threatening to their ethnicity. This same dynamic did not occur in other parts of the country with substantial Latino populations, such as New York or Texas (Ramakrishnan, 2005).

In 1990, Latinos numbered 25% of the California population, while in 2000, Latinos numbered 32% of the population. In 1990, Latinos held 5% of the Assembly and Senate seats, but in 2000, slightly more than 20% of the Legislature was composed of Latinos. Why such explosive growth? In the early 1990s, some scholars predicted that as a result of the enactment of term limits, legislative turnover would increase, thus increasing the possibility of more Latino representation (Donovan & Snipp, 1994; Guerra, 1991). Baldassare estimated that the growth of Latinos serving in the Legislature can be explained by the effect of term limits on incumbents whose districts had become majority Latino over the course of their tenures. Latino voting share in 2000 was only 14% of total voters, signifi-

cantly less than their corresponding percentage of the population. Another key explanation for the increased Latino presence in legislatures is the mere growth of the Latino population in California. Latinos comprised 80% of the new growth in California in the last decade (NALEO, 2004). The number of Latinos serving in the legislature after the 2000 redistricting changes has increased only slightly. Prior to redistricting, only 3 of the 25 Latinos in the legislature had served majority-Latino districts. After redistricting, 20 of the 29 Latinos served majority-Latino districts.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Before 1966, California had a citizen legislature in that members had low budgets and only met part-time. Following constitutional changes in 1966, the legislature became a model for efficient and successful governing. In the mid-1990s, corruption and graft had become a serious problem in California along with budget deficits that continued to rise. The legislature in California has dramatically changed since the 1960s. Members currently receive a salary of \$99,000 per year in addition to expense accounts. More professional and partisan, the legislature is active in its role as the policymaker for California and maintains a vigorous public profile (Cahn, Schockman, & Shafie ., 2001). Early proponents of professionalization, such as former California Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh, argued that such a change would increase racial and ethnic diversity among legislators. According to Squire (1992), however, minorities have not necessarily benefited from the creation of professional legislatures.

Like in many other states, members of the California Legislature are elected from single-member districts. At-large or MMD representational schemes have been shown to be a barrier for minority representation in legislative institutions (Fraga, Meier, & England, 1986). At the same time, research has shown that single-member districts have been beneficial for the election of Latinos, even when controlling for population (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, & Meier, 2004). We should therefore expect that California would be fairly responsive to the election of Latinos to its legislature.

HYPOTHESES

I hypothesize that Latinos are primarily elected from districts with substantial majorities of Latino voters, much in the same pattern as African Americans. Two of the explanatory variables that help explain the election of Latino legislators are district demographics and the belief that Latinos will have more difficulty getting elected to the upper chamber. Latino candidates are more likely to run in districts with higher percentages of Latinos because their chances of winning increase.¹ Accordingly, representatives often come from districts that have like-minded and like-skinned people. Conversely, representatives choose to run in districts with like-minded and like-skinned people. This is most clearly reflected in the way representatives interact with their constituents at home (Fenno, 1978). Much in the same way Swain (1993) demonstrated that African Americans are more at ease with

fellow African American legislators, Latinos are also more likely to trust Latino representatives (Pantoja & Segura, 2003). There is no question, then, that districts with higher proportions of Latinos will be more likely to support Latino candidates.²

Career paths matter in that legislators of all backgrounds have been shown to start their political careers in lower offices such as school boards and gradually rise to more prestigious positions (Fowler & McClure, 1989; Maisel & Stone, 1997). Latinos are not unlike other candidates for legislative positions in the considerations they weigh prior to running for office. If an incumbent retires because of term limits and an open seat becomes available, more candidates may decide to run for political office.³ Incumbency no doubt confers enormous benefits, and challengers decide to run based on whether an incumbent is in the race. The ability to raise money matters too, but is more critical for challengers than incumbents.⁴ Incumbents decide to run in districts that will give them the highest probability of winning. Moreover, consistent with the congressional literature on political ambition, Latinos, like any political novices, should face more difficulty getting elected to higher prestige offices, such as the State Senate. State Senators generally have more political experience than members of the lower house. Because Latinos are political newcomers, it is expected that it will be more difficult for Latinos as a group to get elected to the State Senate.

Most Latinos in California have identified themselves as members of the Democratic Party. Like the U.S. Congress, the California Legislature is generally organized along party lines. The Democrats control the Assembly and the Senate. Despite former Gov. Gray Davis' unpopularity and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's election, few people (except for partisans) expect the Republicans to recapture the Legislature in the foreseeable future. No political party has dominated the California Legislature in the past twenty years. The Democrats won control of the assembly in the mid-1990s in what has apparently started a trend to Democratic dominance. Thus, we would expect Latino legislators to come largely from highly Democratic districts. This is especially the case following the backlash against Republicans in the 1990s regarding Proposition 187 and other policies perceived as anti-Latino and anti-immigrant (Pantoja, Ramirez, & Segura, 2001).

Recent research has shown increasing tension between African Americans and Latinos in many communities. Specifically, scholars have found that the attitudes African Americans have of Latinos and vice-versa are largely shaped by faulty perceptions that the other group poses an economic threat, especially in areas such as North Carolina, which has seen an influx of Latinos residing in a traditionally African American environment (McClain et al., 2006). Additionally, as Latinos become more "mainstreamed," we have seen the emergence of more white-Latino coalitions, such as Mayor Daley's in Chicago (Vaca, 2004). In the early urban politics literature, it was thought that coalitions between African Americans and Latinos would flourish given the dynamics of city politics (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1984). This led to the expectation that African American districts would elect African American legislators, and districts with strong pluralities of African Americans would opt for African Americans in the Democratic primary. Conversely, it was expected that districts with strong African American populations would be less likely to elect Latino legislators.

The following summarizes the hypotheses that I test in this article.

H1: *As the percentage of Latinos in a district increases, the probability of electing a Latino to the Legislature increases*

H2: *Latinos generally have more difficulty getting elected to the State Senate*

H3: *Districts with higher Democratic populations are more likely to elect Latinos to office*

H4: *Districts with higher African American populations are less likely to elect Latinos to office*

DATA

The data used in these analyses come from a variety of different sources. The State of California collects demographic data for each legislative district, which includes population figures on Hispanic origin and black origin. While it would be interesting to compare results with data from the 1990s, these data include only pre- and post-2000 redistricting. While it is true that the growth in Latino representation in the State Legislature occurred following the 1990 redistricting, this article ascertains the conditions under which Latinos have been elected to the legislature in more recent years. Current data were downloaded from the California Legislature Web site, while names of legislators and their respective

Table 1. 2002 California Assembly and Senate Latino Membership

Percentage Latino in District	ASSEMBLY			SENATE		
	N of Districts	N of Latinos		N of Districts	N of Latinos	
10-15	15	0	0%	5	0	0%
16-20	12	0	0%	8	2	25%
21-30	25	3	12%	12	2	17%
31-40	6	0	0%	4	0	0%
41-50	5	2	40%	3	0	0%
51-85	17	13	76%	8	7	88%
Totals	80	18	23%	40	11	28%

Table 2. 2000 California Assembly and Senate Latino Membership

Percentage Latino In District	ASSEMBLY			SENATE		
	N of Districts	N of Latinos		N of Districts	N of Latinos	
2-10	52	1	2%	25	3	12%
11-15	8	2	25%	7	0	0%
16-20	5	1	20%	2	0	0%
21-30	7	4	57%	3	3	100%
31-40	6	6	100%	2	2	100%
41-82	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
Totals	80	16	20%	40	9	23%

ethnic characteristics were obtained from the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) rosters. These rosters are published annually and include information on Latino legislators nationwide.

DATA OBSERVATIONS

Table 1 lists a descriptive account of Latino representation in the California Legislature in the post-2000 redistricting period. Table 1 shows current membership broken down into the Latino composition of the district. The total number of districts falling into each category, followed by the number of Latinos representing each district and the corresponding percentages, are presented for the California Assembly. When observing aggregate percentage of Latinos serving in both Houses, note that the percentage of Latinos serving in the Senate is higher than in the House for both periods. This is a remarkable finding in and of itself given the fact that the Senate is the upper body and is composed of fewer, less homogenous districts. Some states, such as New Jersey and Arizona, have multimember districting schemes of allocating representatives. In such institutional arrangements, three individuals generally run on a ticket, which leaves senior politicians running for the Senate seat. In most cases, these districts lie in areas with large numbers of African Americans, who are more likely to have been mobilized to vote, and suffer from fewer participatory obstacles, such as citizenship and language barriers.

In the California Assembly, Latinos generally have a strong probability of getting elected to districts with 51% or higher Latino populations. The Assembly is composed of 18 Latinos or 23% of the body, which is below Latino's corresponding statewide population. The Senate, however, is composed of 11 members, only slightly below the statewide average of

Table 3. 2002 California Assembly Districts Probit Analysis
Dependent Variable: Latino Representative=1

District	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
% Latino	0.06** (0.01)	0.06** (0.01)	0.08** (0.02)	0.08** (0.02)	—
% African American	—	-0.08* (0.04)	—	-0.06 (0.05)	—
% Latino* % Af-American	—	—	—	—	0.000 (0.000)
% Gore vote 2000	—	—	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	—
Constant	-3.0** (0.52)	-2.8** (0.55)	-1.7** (0.83)	-2.2** (0.94)	0.205** (0.057)
N	80	80	80	80	80
Pseudo R2	0.45	0.51	0.50	0.52	-0.00

* $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$; (Standard errors in parentheses)

Latinos. Eight of the 27 Latino legislators in California were elected from non-Latino districts, including one senator (Deborah Ortíz, D-Sacramento) who was elected from a district that is less than 20% Latino.

Prior to redistricting, these numbers were slightly lower with Latinos having 16 members of the Assembly and 9 members of the Senate. In the aggregate, Latino descriptive representation has improved in recent years. After redistricting, the number of Latino majority districts increased from 2 to 17 in the Assembly and from 1 to 8 in the State Senate. This indicates a concerted effort to increase the number of majority-Latino districts amid the burgeoning Latino population in the state. Undoubtedly, redistricting and demographic changes have rapidly and convincingly changed the political landscape in California.

This article addresses the central research questions by using probit regression analyses to ascertain the impact of various demographic variables on the presence of Latinos in the California Legislature.⁵ The dependent variable is dichotomous with Latino Representative coded as 1, and non-Latino Representative coded as 0.

The key explanatory variable is percentage Latino in district. My prior belief is that this variable will have the strongest influence on the presence of Latino representatives in the Assembly. Thus, in Table 3, Model 1 contains only this explanatory variable. Models 3 and 4 add the percentage Gore vote in district because partisanship helps to explain the presence of Latinos in the California Legislature. That is, most California Latino legislators are Democratic, and the few that are Republican generally represent more marginal districts. Model 2 adds percentage African American in district to control for possible ethnic competition for seats. The African American population in California is substantial in many urban areas, thus posing possible electoral challenges to either incumbent Latino legislators or other Latinos running for districts.

Table 3 shows probit analyses for the California Assembly for 2002. Finally, Figure 1 presents predicted probabilities based on the probit analysis to determine the possibility of a Latino being elected to the General Assembly.

RESULTS

The strongest predictor of the presence of a Latino in the California General Assembly is the percentage of Latinos in a given district, at least in the bivariate model. Unexpectedly, percentage vote for Gore is not a powerful predictor in that it does not have a significant effect on the presence of a Latino member in either Model 3 or Model 4. When a control variable for percentage African American is included along with these explanatory variables, percentage Latino is not a significant predictor of the presence of a Latino representative. Percentage African American is signed in the negative direction, although not significant in Model 4. In Model 2, the percentage African American coefficient is significant in the negative direction, indicating support for hypothesis 4.

African American legislators perform better in districts with strong pluralities of Latinos, but Latino legislators do not perform well in districts with strong pluralities of African Americans. When given the option, African Americans will vote for other African

American candidates (Lublin, 1997; Tate, 1999). For African Americans, percentage Democratic is collinear, and to some extent this is true for some Latino populations; but in Model 4, no explanatory variable except for percentage Latino has a significant impact on the presence of Latinos in the Assembly.⁶ In other words, no Latino legislators represent majority black districts in California, while two African American legislators represent majority Latino districts. Four districts with from 25% to 49% Latino populations currently have African American legislators. Model 5 tests whether biracial coalitions (between Latinos and African Americans) are producing Latino legislators, and the evidence suggests that they do not.⁷

What do the previous numbers indicate? These African American legislators represent districts that are increasingly becoming more Latino. When the African Americans retire, it is more than likely that Latinos will run and be serious contenders for these seats. This could exacerbate tensions between Latinos and African Americans (Vaca, 2004). These findings alone provide empirical evidence of one possible manifestation of tensions between Latinos and African Americans in California, whereas other research has demonstrated such attitudes in places as diverse as North Carolina and New York (McClain et al., 2005; Vaca, 2004).

Figure 1. Probability of Electing a Latino to the California Assembly, 2002

Source: Table 3, Model 3

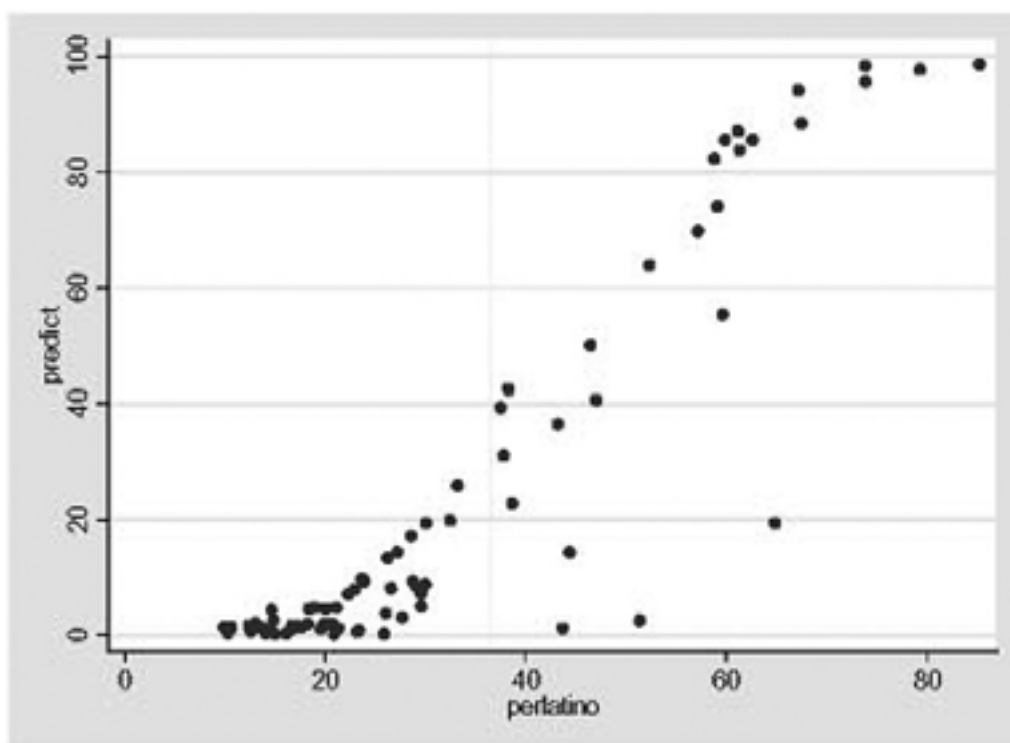


Table 4. 2002 California Senate Districts Probit Analysis
Dependent Variable: Latino Representative=1

District	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
% Latino	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	0.04** (0.01)	—
% African American	—	—	-0.00 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	—
%Latino*	—	—	—	—	-0.000
% Afr. American	—	—	—	—	(0.001)
%Gore vote 2000	—	0.04 (0.02)	0.04 (0.03)	—	—
Constant	-2.1** (0.53)	-4.0** (1.4)	-4.1* (1.5)	-2.4 (0.62)	-0.313 (0.172)
N	40	40	40	40	40
Pseudo R2	0.27	0.33	0.33	0.29	0.36

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; (Standard errors in parentheses)

Predicted probabilities of Latino election to the California General Assembly generally follow anticipated patterns. In most of the districts with 40% or fewer Latinos, a Latino also has a low probability of gaining election to the Assembly. In the Latino majority districts, the predicted probability of a Latino gaining election slightly exceeds the percentage of Latinos in the district, although there are a couple of outliers. These are often white or African American incumbents serving in districts that have only recently become majority Latino, and because of their name recognition and financial resources, they are able to win those seats.

In the California Senate, percentage Latino is highly significant in all four models presented. Unlike the Assembly, however, percentage African American is not significant when paired with percentage Latino. It is the case, however, that percentage Latino in a district is the best predictor of a Latino's presence in the Senate. This does not mean that Latinos serve only majority-Latino districts. In fact, eight Latinos serve in non-Latino majority districts in the California Legislature.⁸ Like in the Assembly, Latino candidates do not benefit from a combination of Latino and African American voters in their districts.⁹

While the Republican Party has been particularly interested in recruiting and running Latino candidates (e.g., Abel Maldonado), it is not always the case that the party supports a Latino candidate. Some Latinos may be elected to office despite the efforts of the party establishment. Assemblyman Bob Pacheco, a Latino Republican, was first elected in 1998 to represent his district, which is 24% Latino and majority-white. He narrowly defeated Democrat Ben Wong by a 52% to 45% margin. Prior to his election, Pacheco served as a

business advisor and attorney, a bank vice president, and an owner of a manufacturing company in what is undoubtedly a successful career. He is the chair of the Latino Republican caucus and is active in recruiting Latino voters and candidates to the Republican Party of California. Pacheco described his initial election to the Assembly by saying that he “was a dark horse. . .” and that “the party endorsed [his] opponent” (Rojas, 2003). In this case, two minority candidates ran against each other, *despite* the fact that Pacheco was not the desired candidate of his party elite. In the end, white Republicans supported a Latino Republican instead of an Asian Democrat.

The observations for the Senate are not as nicely placed in an S-shaped pattern as we saw in Figure 1. Most of the districts with 40% or below Latino have substantially less probability of having a Latino represent the district. Districts with 60% and above Latino generally have a 60% and above probability of having a Latino represent the given district. The predicted probability of a Latino serving even in majority Latino districts is oftentimes very low in other states, indicating some degree of support for the mobilization of Latinos in California following the anti-immigrant mood of the 1990s (Pantoja & Segura, 2003).

Have these patterns been similar in recent years? Table 5 shows a probit analysis using similar data for the 2000 pre-redistricting California Assembly. The results have largely been the same in that percentage Latino in a district was and remains a highly significant

Figure 2. Probability of Electing a Latino to the California Senate, 2002

Source: Table 4, Model 3

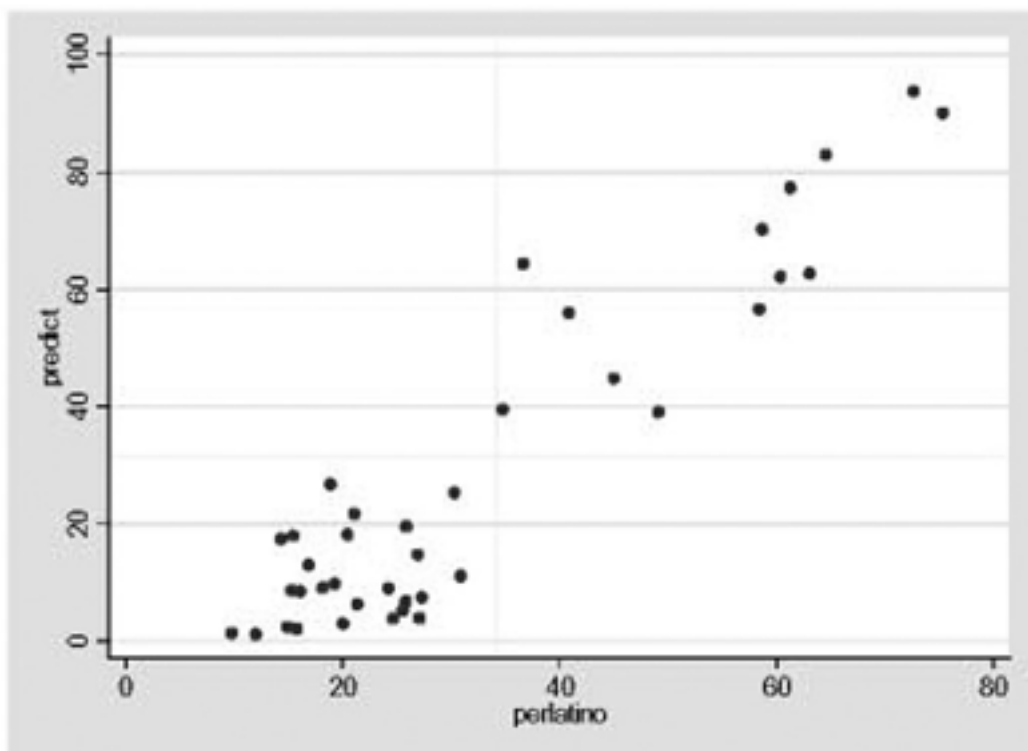


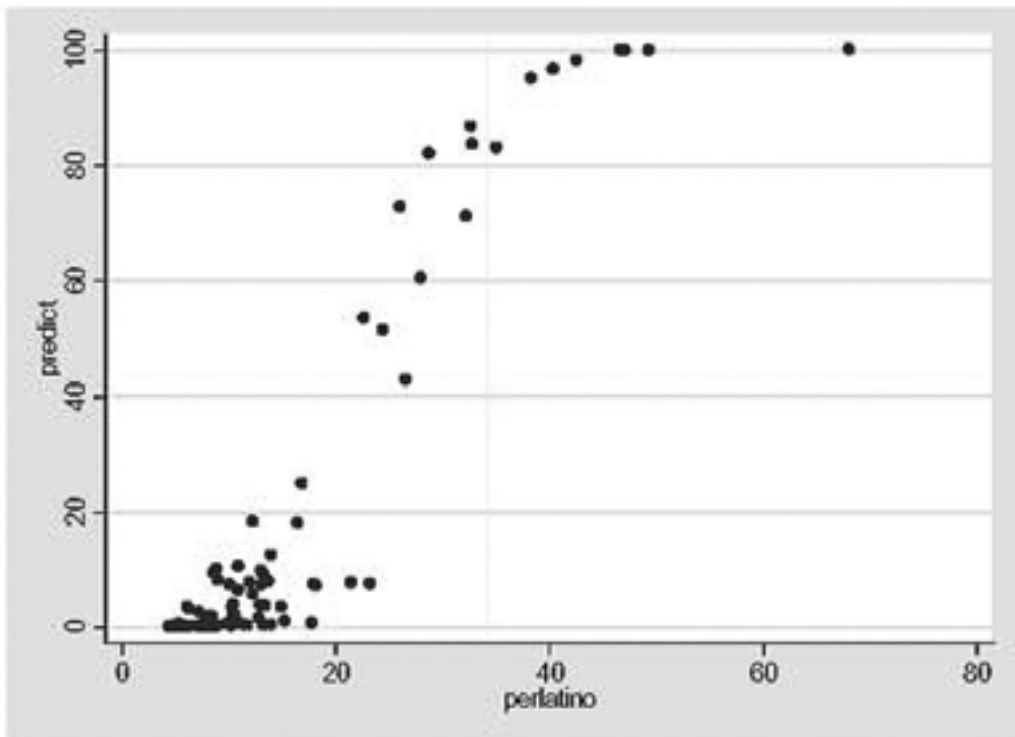
Table 5. 2000 California Assembly Districts Probit Analysis
Dependent Variable: Latino Representative=1

District	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
% Latino	0.12** (0.03)	0.17** (0.05)	0.18** (0.05)	0.13** (0.03)
% African American	—	—	0.02 (0.04)	-0.02 (0.03)
% Democratic	—	-0.06 (0.04)	-0.08 (0.05)	—
Constant	-3.2** (0.59)	-1.1 (0.04)	-0.66 (1.6)	-3.1** (0.60)
N	80	80	80	80
Pseudo R2	0.58	0.63	0.63	0.60

*P<=.05; **P<=.01; (Standard errors in parentheses)

Figure 3. Probability of Electing a Latino to the California Assembly, 2002

Source: Table 5, Model 3



predictor of a Latino serving in the legislature. Unlike 2002, however, the percentage African American variable was not significant. Instead of percentage Gore vote in 2000, the percentage of registered Democrats in the district is used as one of the explanatory variables. Despite the difference, these two variables are largely collinear and, thus, are comparable across this period.

The 2000 California Assembly is different than the 2002 version. One notices the heavy concentration of 20% and lower Latino districts that have a corresponding 20% or lower probability of seeing a Latino serve. However, the key difference is in the number of districts that even have a majority Latino district, which was minimal during this time period. Despite this, even districts with modest Latino populations (of 40% and above) have remarkably higher probabilities of Latinos serving in the legislature.

In the 2000 California Senate, notice that in a somewhat peculiar finding, percentage Latino is not significant in Model 3, which includes percentage African American and Democratic. In Model 3, percentage Democratic is significant at the .05 level, although in the other three models, percentage Latino is a significant predictor of Latino presence in the Senate. While this finding would seem to support my hypothesis concerning Democratic districts being more amenable to Latino candidates, this is not a general finding in the other models for the Assembly in either 2000 or 2002.

When comparing the figures for the 2000 and 2002 California Senate, the pattern that I hypothesize is largely borne out. Districts with 40% or below Latino have extremely low probabilities of 20% or below of having Latino representatives. Majority Latino districts generally have equal or exceeding probabilities of having Latinos serve in the districts. This graph, then, indicates that, all else being equal, Latinos are not any more or less likely to serve in the Senate than in the Assembly. This is a remarkable finding, given what we

Table 6. 2000 California Senate Districts Probit Analysis
Dependent Variable: Latino Representative=1

District	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
% Latino	0.05** (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	0.05** (0.02)
% African American	—	—	-0.07 (0.05)	0.01 (0.02)
% Democratic	—	0.05 (0.03)	0.12* (0.06)	—
Constant	-2.1** (0.52)	-4.2** (1.4)	-7.1** (2.6)	-2.2** (0.57)
N	40	40	40	40
Pseudo R2	0.26	0.34	0.41	0.27

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; (Standard errors in parentheses)

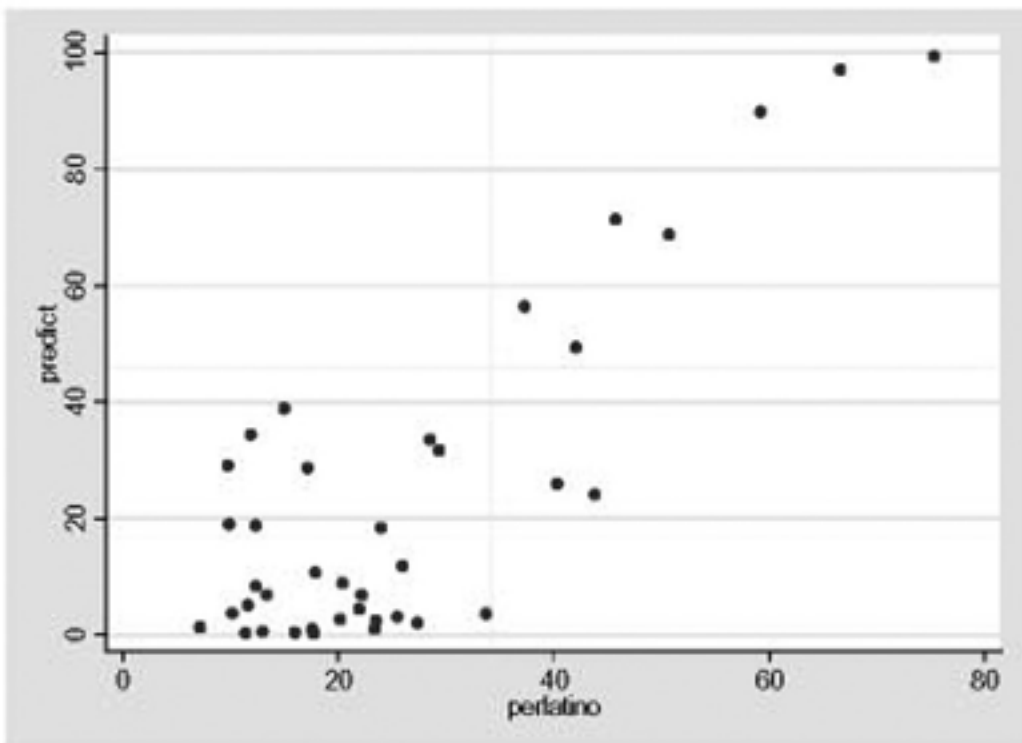
know about political ambition and career paths for all other legislators. No chamber effect is evident, indicating that Latinos are not following traditional career paths in California. This is because the growth of Latinos serving in the California Legislature was so fast that political newcomers entered into the political fray to take advantage of the emerging opportunities. Additional research is needed to ascertain the precise reasons why the traditional career path is not apparent for Latino legislators in California.

CONCLUSION

In the California Legislature, Latinos are slowly becoming viable contenders in districts that are not majority Latino. Two of the five Latinos serving in the California Senate are elected from non-Latino majority districts, and one of the five Latinos serving in the California Assembly is elected from a non-Latino majority district. Only one Latino, however, represents a district with a combined black and Latino majority, suggesting that black-brown coalitions are not readily apparent in California. Prior to redistricting, the majority of Latinos serving in the California Legislature did not come from majority Latino districts. However, the fact remains that the strongest predictor of Latino presence in the legislature is percentage Latino in district, confirming hypothesis 1.

Figure 4. Probability of Electing a Latino to the California Senate, 2000

Source: Table 6, Model 3



It does not appear that Latinos are following a traditional career path in California, as hypothesis 2 predicts. Future research should focus on the precise reasons for this. Partisanship does not seem to matter, as hypothesis 3 predicts. Districts with higher Democratic populations are no more likely to elect Latino legislators, indicating that even in California, voters generally vote for people who are of the same racial or ethnic background. In accordance with recent research indicating possible tensions between African Americans and Latinos, it turns out that African American legislators benefit more from Latino voters than vice-versa, indicating support for hypothesis 4.

Each state has unique characteristics, but as Lublin (1997) showed for the U.S. House, the "probability of a non-Latino gaining election in a Latino majority district declines as the percentage of Latinos in a district rises" (p. 49). This is true in California, yet Latinos do not seem to have as much difficulty as African Americans in getting elected to non-Latino majority districts with a combined Latino and white majority. This bodes well for future Latino politicians in that more and more Latinos will get elected to districts with combined white and Latino majority populations, not to mention Latino majority districts.

The implications for this increased descriptive representation on the substantive policy issues that Latinos care about are promising. A recent study for African Americans in legislatures indicates that black interests have been promoted with the growing numbers of blacks in legislatures (Haynie, 2001). At the same time, research in Latino politics has shown that increased descriptive representation leads to higher rates of voter turnout among Latinos (Barreto, Segura, & Woods, 2004). Moreover, Latinos who are represented by Latino elected officials have greater levels of trust in government and are more likely to feel better represented (Gordon & Segura, 2002). Because we know very little about the conditions under which Latinos are elected to legislatures, this article has uncovered evidence of Latino legislators getting elected from majority-Latino districts rather than districts with combined Latino and black majorities. Public policymakers should take notice that Latinos are increasingly being elected to the California Legislature, yet the evidence suggests that Latinos can and sometimes do win in districts without Latino majorities. These districts more often than not have combined Latino and white majorities. While black-brown coalitions were more prominent in recent years, Latinos have increasingly joined with whites to elect legislators (Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1984). This has enormous implications for black-Latino relations not only in California but also in the United States in years to come.

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NOTES

- 1 Redistricting counts persons of Latino ethnicity, regardless of citizenship. Many “safe” Latino districts have relatively low numbers of Latino voters who are ineligible to vote because they are not yet U.S. citizens. At the same time, politicians need to be keenly aware of the “potential preferences” of their districts, as Arnold (1990) pointed out for members of Congress. Just because many Latinos do not or cannot currently vote does not mean that they will not vote in the future, especially if an exogenous event, such as Proposition 187 or anti-immigration legislation gives them incentives to do so.
- 2 While this expectation may seem intuitive and well-established in the scholarly literature, it is not, as the bulk of research in Latino politics has focused on political behavior rather than on the election of Latinos to state legislatures and Congress. The little research on institutions and representation largely focuses on school board elections (see Fraga et al.’s 2006 excellent review of the literature).
- 3 See Fowler & McClure (1989) for more on the dynamics of potential candidates in congressional districts, as well as the role of political ambition in determining who runs for Congress.
- 4 See Cox and Katz (1996) and Jacobson (1997) for more on the incumbency advantage and factors determining who runs for congressional districts.
- 5 Probit regression analysis is appropriate in cases where the dependent variable is dichotomous (either 1 or 0).
- 6 The correlation between percentage African American and percentage Gore vote is .56, while the correlation between percentage Latino and percentage Gore vote is .41, indicating that multicollinearity is not an issue here.
- 7 A similar test was conducted to determine if the same interaction variable between percentage Latino and percentage African American was significant in terms of African American legislators, and research shows that indeed African American legislators significantly benefit from the presence of Latino voters in their districts.
- 8 The eight Latinos who serve non-Latino majority districts are Jenny Oropeza, Manny Diaz, Dario Frommer, Abel Maldonado, Mike Machado, Bob Pacheco, Liz Figueroa, and Deborah Ortiz (2002).
- 9 Like the Assembly, a similar test was conducted to determine whether African American legislators benefit from a combination of Latino and African American voters, and the finding is significant at the $p > .05$ level. Moreover, results from the 2000 data are not presented but show substantively similar results, and they are available upon request.

RESEARCH NOTE*

Comparing San Francisco's At-Large and District Supervisor Elections' Average Spending and Participation Rates

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effect of San Francisco's reversion to district elections for city supervisors after almost 100 years of holding at-large races. The major findings are that the reform reduced the amount of money necessary for individual candidates to compete and, ultimately, reduced winning candidates' spending as well. Additionally, the paper identifies large differences in overall and minority participation rates as measured by turnout and rolloff, finding that the district format modestly increased turnout and dramatically reduced rolloff, compared with the at-large races.

After years of holding at-large elections, many municipal governments across the country have returned to district city supervisor elections. Some cities have restructured their systems due to pressure from courts and advocacy groups, which argue that at-large supervisor elections are discriminatory toward minority interests and thus discourage participation, and that they are prohibitively expensive. However, little academic research has examined the impact of these changes and assessed if such assumptions regarding institutional format and its effects are true. In fact, the scarce research that has been conducted has generally not supported the arguments regarding the diminished effect of money in district races, and it has been mixed regarding whether districts increase, decrease, or have no effect on constituent participation. If one system decreases the influence of money and increases resident participation, this is information that could be useful to minority groups, policy makers, and reform advocates. It would also lend weight to calls for further reform in those cities that continue to hold at-large elections.

* Research notes are shorter and more focused articles on specific policy issues. We hope that these articles will become inspirational sources for full-length articles in the future.

This article examines the impact of San Francisco's change from an at-large format to a district format for electing city supervisors, looking closely at the amounts of money spent on the races and the rates of participation of residents.¹ In 1996, San Francisco voters approved a referendum that called on the city to begin holding district elections beginning in 2000. This change provides an excellent opportunity for a quasi-experimental analysis of the impact of the electoral configuration on campaigns and constituent behavior.

The district system, which San Francisco adopted in 2000, divided the city into 11 districts, with an approximately equal number of voters in each, and provided that every district elect a single representative². Reformers had argued that returning to districts would be an advantage over the at-large system for numerous reasons: geographic ties to districts and smaller population segments would allow one to better address specific problems of a community or neighborhood; less money would be needed to conduct successful campaigns; and these changes would result in better representation for the people of San Francisco. Furthermore, district elections had long been advocated for by minority groups who argued that, historically, at-large elections were used to dilute minority power and votes. Some evidence also suggests that a broad new majority of blacks, Latinos, and white progressives had united to support the change to district elections.

It is interesting to note briefly that San Francisco did adopt districts in the late 1970s, but voters quickly reverted to at-large elections after the tragic killing of Mayor Moscone and openly gay district supervisor Harvey Milk by district supervisor Dan White, who represented the most conservative district in the city. Subsequent reform efforts were stymied by memories of this event, playing into opponents' arguments that districts were too divisive. Furthermore, district proposals were defeated more than once before finally passing again in 1996.

This paper posits two hypotheses: First, the average amount of money spent by individual candidates in district elections will decrease as a result of the district elections.³ Second, the participation rates, measured by examining turnout and rolloff⁴ percentages, will increase. Furthermore, these increases in participation will be most pronounced in minority populations.

There have been relatively few studies of how changing from at-large elections to district elections affects campaign spending. Researchers Heilig and Mundt (1984) in *Your Voice at City Hall*, a well-regarded analysis of this question, stated that most campaign spending reporting laws were not passed until the post-Watergate reform period because data were not available earlier. They further pointed out that many cities that changed from at-large to district elections in the early 1980s did so before campaign spending reporting laws had gone into effect, so the opportunity to compare pre-reform with post-reform reports is unfortunately lost. However, they did present what they admit is a rudimentary analysis of the effect of campaign spending in at-large versus district city elections for a small number of cities, primarily located in the South. They found that campaign spending averages "are lower for district than for at-large seats" (p. 76). However, they discovered "no evidence that a district system serves to hold down the influence of money on election results" (p. 76).

Their findings support my hypothesis that campaign spending will decline, for two reasons. First, the city was divided into smaller segments; each district now has approximately 60,000 potential voters, with about 1/11th of the electorate in each. In district elections, it would be possible for candidates to cover the smaller area with flyers, targeted mailings, and door-to-door campaigning, which could be efficient and economical. Previously, to reach the larger potential voting population in citywide elections, candidates needed to spend large amounts on television ads and radio spots to compete. In district elections, these expensive citywide appeals were not cost effective because the majority of voters fell outside the candidate's district.

Second, in the at-large race, because the top five or six candidates won, there were often upward-spiraling spending battles. Voters could cast one vote for each open seat, but the candidates needed to spend more money to be at the head of the pack. Gary Cox's (1990) work on incentives in electoral systems indicated that by switching to district elections, there would be a greater tendency to reach equilibrium, with just two main candidates competing to appeal to the "median voter" in that district. Thus, in district elections, there would potentially be fewer candidates, which would lower the likelihood of a five-to-seven-way spending race.

Heilig and Mundt (1984) also looked at differences in participation, primarily looking at turnout, but they found little difference between the systems. They identified "no consistent overall impact of structural change on participation" (p. 77). However, more recent examinations have found that district elections have a much lower rate of participation than at-large races. Researchers Hajnal and Lewis (2003) concluded, focusing on cities in California, that cities with at-large elections have significantly higher turnout than those with district elections. However, they pointed out that difficulties arise in determining causality, because it is likely that "district elections are a response to low turnout rather than a cause of low turnout" (p. 649). Consequently, those cities with large minority populations are more likely to have instituted district elections as a remedy for past discrimination, and these minority populations for various historic and other reasons⁵ have very low turnout. Because San Francisco changed from one system to another and roughly the same pool of voters participated in each type of election, a study of this change will minimize the chance of this type of spurious conclusion. The study should also provide a more clear measure of the impact of the two systems on voter turnout.

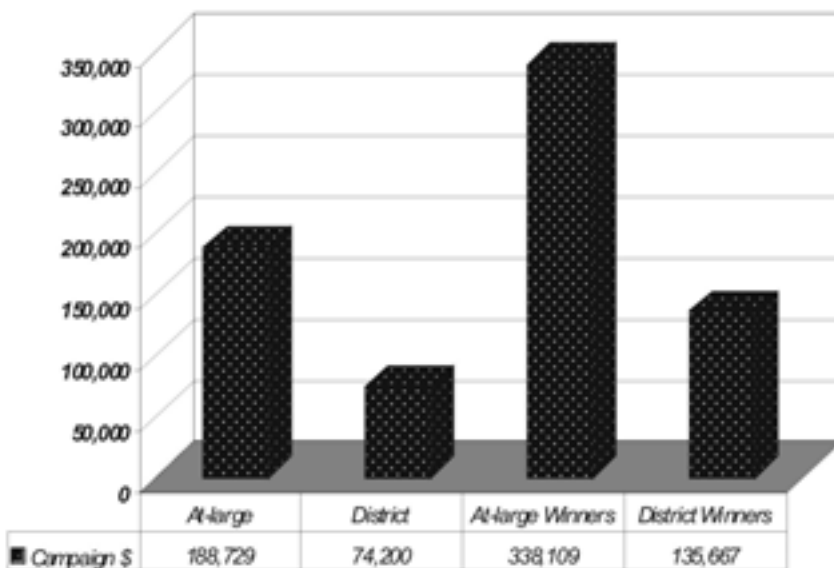
Haselswerdt (1984), in his study of voter participation in district and at-large elections in Buffalo, New York, proposed looking at rolloff instead of focusing solely on turnout. Rolloff occurs when voters do not express a choice for every race, and in this case it is when they do not cast a vote for supervisor. This approach may provide a more satisfactory measure of the differences in voter behavior between the two systems, because the effect can more easily be isolated from other factors, and the differences can be more directly attributed to the type of election. Because Haselswerdt argued that district office visibility is higher than in at-large elections (at least for a particular district's voter), he believed district elections would have lower rolloff, and his findings supported this. In his analysis, voters had higher rolloff in at-large than in district elections, even in single member at-large races.

I hypothesize that overall, as well as minority, participation in San Francisco's district supervisor elections will increase, for a number of reasons. Turnout might increase due to the higher visibility of a district candidate within a district. A candidate might live and work in that district, whereas under an at-large system candidates could and often have come from only the wealthiest neighborhoods: Under district elections, councilors have had to reside in the district they wished to represent. Furthermore, as Haselswerdt (1984) noted, citizens are more likely to meet, greet, or hear about the actions of district representatives, and this would increase the likelihood that voters will cast a vote. Additionally, by tying representatives to a small geographical subsection of the city, the opportunities for what Fiorina (1989) and others called casework are increased, which suggests that having representatives solve constituent problems increases constituent loyalty and likelihood of voting. Over time, these networks of satisfied residents can influence both turnout and rolloff, especially for smaller constituencies.

Additionally, districts would have less rolloff, in part because of the decrease in the amount of information voters need to gather to make decisions in district elections, because in many at-large elections, voters would have five or six votes to research and cast rather than just one in district elections. Also, voters might feel that not casting all their votes for an at-large race is not as consequential as not casting their single vote in a district election, because they at least cast one or more votes for the position.

Furthermore, when it comes to minority turnout and rolloff, districts would decrease both the physical and psychological distance between elected officials and their constituents, and this might increase minority participation. Representatives from districts are more likely to look like, work like, and live like the other residents of the district, and this

Figure 1. Average Reported Campaign Spending in SF BOS Races: At-large (1996 & 1998) vs. District (2000, 2002 & 2004)



might increase the connection between minority voters and potential candidates. Likewise in districts where minority groups constituted a near majority of the voters, those particular minority groups might participate at higher rates because of the desire to have particular representation in the larger city government.

FINDINGS

I begin by comparing campaign spending reports from the 1996 and 1998 at-large elections with the spending reports from the 2000, 2002, and 2004 district elections. This comparison shows a large difference in the amounts spent on the two different campaign types. Figure 1 shows that at-large candidates reported spending an average of \$188,729, which was double that of district candidates, who averaged \$74,200. When examining only winning candidates, the difference is even greater. Winning at-large candidates spent 2 1/2 times what winning district candidates spent, averaging \$338,109 per successful race, while successful district candidates only spent an average of \$135,667. These findings support the idea that the return to district elections dramatically reduced the amount of money necessary to compete and win. Additional testing is needed to see whether spending in district elections was less influential in determining winners, but these figures show that individual campaigns at least spent less.

Another way to analyze the impact is to see how often the candidate who spent the most won. This analysis also shows some change from an at-large system to a district format. In the two at-large elections examined in this study, 11 of the 16 candidates who spent over \$100,000 won a seat on the board of supervisors, a 69% success rate. Contrast that with only 10 of the 21 candidates who spent that amount winning seats in the three district elections examined, which is a 48% win rate. This study shows a drop of 21 percentage points in the chance of a candidate winning in district elections compared with at-large. Additionally, all 5 at-large candidates who spent over \$400,000 won their race, compared with just 4 district candidates who won out of the 6 who spent over \$250,000.⁶ This drop from a 100% success rate to just less than a rate of 67% represents a 33-percentage-point drop. This suggests that the change in electoral structure may have also altered the determinative nature of campaign spending, but additional research is needed to verify these results and confirm the magnitude of the impact.

Turning to an examination of participation rates, again the findings suggest that there is an impact. Figure 2 shows that turnout for the district elections increased, rising 8 percentage points from an average precinct turnout of 54% in at-large elections to an average of 62% in the district elections. In estimating⁷ minority turnout, the results were mixed. There appears to be no increase in turnout by black voters in district elections. For Asian/Pacific Islander (Asian/PI) voters, there was an increase of 10 percentage points in turnout from an average of 51% to an average of 61%. This is especially notable because this is larger than the overall increase. The results also show a more modest 2-percentage-point increase in Latino voting rates. While for some groups the turnout effect was minimal, overall there appears to be a small increase in participation as measured by turnout.

Figure 2. Overall Average Turnout and Estimated Average Minority Turnout for SFBOS Elections: At-large (1996 & 1998) vs. District (2000, 2002, & 2004)

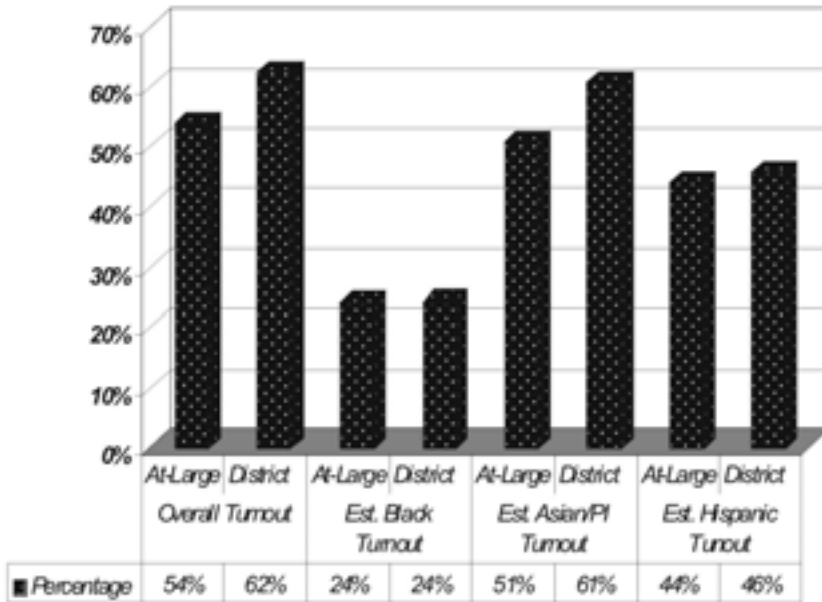
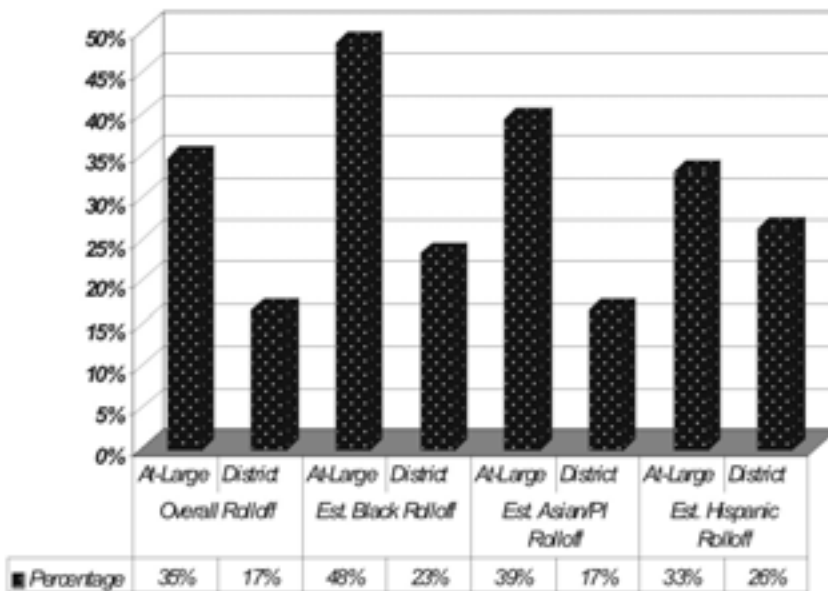


Figure 3. Overall Average Rolloff and Estimated Average Minority Rolloff for SFBOS Elections: At-large (1996 & 1998) vs. District (2000, 2002 & 2004)



As mentioned earlier, turnout is not the only measure of participation. Participation can also be more influenced by and reflective of the enthusiasm generated by races for higher office, such as mayor, governor, or president. Rolloff would seem to be less likely to vary as a result of these outside races, thus an examination of the rolloff rates under different systems might be more indicative of any hypothesized increase in participation.

A distinction must be made between types of rolloff. Rolloff in district elections is easily understood. It is calculated as the number of votes cast, divided by the total number of voters. For example, if you had 10 voters and 1 open seat, 9 votes cast would be a 10% rolloff rate. However, rolloff in at-large races is calculated differently. In these races, there would be 5 or 6 open seats, and the voter could cast 1 vote for each open seat. Rolloff for at-large races is determined by dividing the total number of votes cast by the total number that could have been cast. Again, if you had 10 voters and 5 open seats, 45 votes cast would calculate to a 10% rolloff. While there are reasons why the two different configurations are logically distinct, any differences found in the rate of rolloff between the two systems would represent a change in the level of participation by voters and would be noteworthy.

Figure 3 shows the dramatic reduction in rolloff under district elections. This change in rolloff indicates that once in the voting booth, voters, overall and in each racial/ethnic group, participated by casting votes for supervisors at a much higher rate in district races than in at-large elections. The estimated rolloff was cut in half for every group excluding Latinos. The overall rolloff rate fell from 35% in at-large elections to 17% in districts, representing a decrease of 18 percentage points. Black voters more than halved their estimated rolloff rate, falling from a very high rate of 48% in at-large races to just 23%, representing a 25-percentage-point decrease in rolloff. Asian/PI voters also more than halved their estimated rolloff rate, dropping their rolloff rate 22 percentage points, from 39% in at-large races to 17% in district elections. Latino voters also reduced their rate under the new format. Latino rolloff fell 9 percentage points, from 33% under at-large elections to 26% in districts. These citywide reductions give strong support to the hypothesis that district elections increase participation. Additional analysis, controlling for outside factors and using formal modeling (such as time-series analysis), could shed additional light on the change in participation rates brought about by this reform.

CONCLUSION

Much as previous research has predicted, the change in San Francisco's electoral format seems to have reduced the amounts that city supervisor campaigns spent on their races. However, unlike Heilig and Mundt's findings, this research found some evidence of a diminished effect of spending on outcomes. Also, when examining participation, these findings contrast with Heilig and Mundt's findings of no effect on participation and support Haselswerdt's research that rolloff would be diminished. Furthermore, rather than finding diminished participation as researchers Hajnal and Lewis did, I found that in San Francisco's district races there was a modest increase in turnout, and a very large decrease in rolloff, indicating that city residents participated at a higher rate under the new format. Further

study, using more elections, more cities, and more formal analysis, is called for to determine if there are significant changes in the impact of spending on who ultimately wins and the magnitude of the changes to participation.

These preliminary findings, taken as a whole, may have broader implications for those interested in reforming their government and improving their representation. This analysis suggests that there are noteworthy differences between the two systems and supports the idea that district elections reduce the funds needed to run successful campaigns, increase the participation of constituents, and especially increase minority involvement. These changes might provide opportunities for candidates representing different geographic areas, viewpoints, demographics, and levels of funding to run and be competitive. While more sophisticated statistical analysis is needed to further test these hypotheses, the result of San Francisco's change from at-large to district elections appears to have had some of the intended effects that advocates had hoped for. The outcome also seems to have reduced the impact of money on who will win and increased the participation of minorities. The increases that were seen in participation under district elections, especially in rolloff, are positive signs that San Francisco residents, especially minority residents, are taking a more active role in determining their representation.

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Access at: http://www.sfgov.org/site/election_index.asp?id=5877

U.S. Census Bureau; precinct-level data for the city of San Francisco: 2000; published April 2, 2001.

NOTES

- 1 This paper compares the 1996 and 1998 at-large elections in San Francisco with the 2000, 2002, and 2004 district elections.
- 2 Due to a requirement that any candidate win by a majority of votes, in 2000 and 2002, there were runoff elections for the ultimate winner that did not coincide with any other elections. Largely as a result of drastically low turnout in these runoffs, voters approved an innovative instant runoff system that was instituted in 2004, eliminating the need for expensive and poorly attended runoff elections.
- 3 My campaign spending data are from reports filed by candidates with the City and County of San Francisco Ethics Committee. The 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 spending data can be found at: <http://sunset.ci.sf.ca.us/ecpublisht.nsf>. The 1996 spending data are filed in the San Francisco office. Candidates were not required to file reports if they spent less than \$5,000.
- 4 Rolloff, sometimes referred to as undervote, occurs when a voter does not cast a vote for every open position. For many reasons, voters occasionally indicate a choice for president but leave their choice for other races blank. This rolloff tends to be higher for down-ballot races, such as state representative or city supervisor.
- 5 For example, Jim Crow laws, literacy tests, poll taxes, outright intimidation, and other means of disenfranchising minority populations. Additionally, for Asian/PI and Hispanic voters, language or feared political obstacles might be obstacles to voting.
- 6 No district candidate spent over \$346,000 on his or her campaign.
- 7 For the estimated precinct level turnout and rolloff rates for minority groups, this article utilizes Gary King's (1997) method for estimating individual-level data from aggregate data. These estimates were calculated using precinct-level U.S. Census data from 2000 regarding racial makeup, combined with turnout and rolloff percentages from the San Francisco Registrar of Voters' Statements of Vote for the years 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004.

POLICY PERSPECTIVE*

PUBLIC SPACE: Exploration of a Concept

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ABSTRACT

The term *public space* is used to mean many different things; this article distinguishes between the metaphorical and literal uses of the term to highlight how power operates differently in the different conceptions of public space. In the metaphorical use of the words, here exemplified by Arendt's and Habermas's discussions of public space and the public sphere, power is found in the direct relationships between people. In the literal use of the words, here exemplified by the story of suburbanization, power is mediated by the built environment. Naturally, the two uses of *public space* cannot be strictly separated: For example, the boundaries that surround public space exclude unwanted segments of the population both metaphorically, by defining who belongs to the public, and literally, by erecting barriers that only certain members of the population possess the resources to cross. *Public space* is a useful but slippery term: There is never a perfect overlap between a well-functioning metaphorical public space and a well-functioning literal public space; therefore, we cannot assume that one engenders the other.

Public space is a term that is used to signify many different things: a certain kind of discursive practice, a physical space, or a set of spatially located relationships that define a community, to name just a few. It is hardly surprising, then, that different observers draw different distinctions among the various uses of the term. Thus, Goodsell (2003) used a tripartite division among democratic theorists, who use the term to signify "a social, not physical, realm of action and communication," urban planners, who "visualize it as largely exterior places in the cityscape," and political scientists interpreting architecture, who are concerned with "the facades and interiors of public buildings" (p. 369). Hénaff and Strong (2001) defined *public space* according to its location along two axes (how open a space is and to what extent it is human rather than divine); this location sets it apart from private,

* Occasionally, California Politics and Policy designates a section of the journal for "Policy Perspectives". Articles appearing in this section are meant to generate substantive discussions around an important topic. Responses to these articles will appear in future issues of the journal.

common, and sacred space. They discussed the criteria that determine the types of human relationships that are possible in public space (namely, that it is open, that it is a human artifact, and that it is theatrical). The list of classification schemas could be made endless, but it should be clear even from these two examples that the term *public space* captures many, often wildly dissimilar, meanings. Consequently, there is no consensus in the literature on how to use the term.

I will further add to this cacophony by proposing a not very original distinction between the metaphorical and literal uses of the term—and immediately proceed to tear down this distinction. The two uses can never be meaningfully separated: Metaphorical public space is more than an abstract mental construct, and literal public space is more than a collection of objects. Discussions of metaphorical public space will tend to rely on attributes of literal public space and vice versa. They are also more directly related. That is, discussions that take place in metaphorical public space can result in changes in literal public space: We shape our environment—parks, plazas, streets, freeways, shopping centers, and buildings—based on some form of public deliberation (at least ideally), after hearing from neighborhood residents, business interests, public officials, and so on. Likewise, the literal public spaces in which we move shape the kinds of public life we can have—by providing or restricting access to spaces to inhabit or in which to protest, by limiting who can enter which spaces and under which conditions, and on a larger level, by drawing the boundaries of electoral districts.

Although I will attempt to disentangle the two uses of *public space*, that is not my main purpose; rather, I impose this distinction because it brings out how power operates differently depending on whether one uses the term metaphorically or literally. As I hope to show, in metaphorical public space we find power in the relationships directly between human beings, while in literal public space, power is mediated by the relationship between human beings and their environment. In metaphorical public space, power flows directly between the people who appear in the space: since this space is one defined by human relationships, the type of power that exists there will be lodged in those relationships. This is the kind of power that comes from social and economic inequality, from coercion, from cooperation, from spectacular displays, and so on. In literal public space, power operates very differently. Here power works through visual cues, barriers, and promptings; it is a power that directs and pushes us on an emotional level: We experience space, we do not constantly analyze it intellectually.¹ In metaphorical space, then, power can be directly coercive and exhortative: We can be directed or persuaded as an immediate cause of someone else exerting his or her power over us. In literal space, power can at best nudge us in a certain direction or set a mood; it is never the *direct* cause of an action, merely a contributing factor.

Thinking of public space as a composite of relationships and places ignores the difference between how relationships and places influence human beings, and it overlooks that we are dealing with very dissimilar kinds of power. There is a qualitative difference between, for example, directly prohibiting someone from protesting and building an environment in which it is difficult to gather and protest.² Of course, since metaphorical and

literal public space cannot be separated, the kinds of power they imply cannot really be separated either, and that is exactly the crux of my argument: Although the different kinds of power cannot be separated, they are not the same, and because they are not the same, they must be addressed in different ways. However, because they are linked, the relationship between inequalities of power in metaphorical public space and inequalities in literal public space is complex: Changes in one influences the possibility for change in the other as well. Thus, gentrification in the Tenderloin in San Francisco affects both the balance of power in the neighborhood and the physical environment of that neighborhood—but at the same time, the community that exists in the metaphorical public space of the Tenderloin has been successful at slowing down gentrification and its impact on the literal public space of the neighborhood (Robinson, 1995). If we are not careful about how we think about public space, it is easy to mistake one kind of power for another, and we should not fool ourselves into believing that correcting one will necessarily correct the other as well.

METAPHORICAL PUBLIC SPACE

When we use the term *public space* metaphorically, we use it to refer not to a physical space but to a space in which we can act or communicate with other people, a space carved out by the fact of our being in relation to other people. Here, we use *space* to stand in for something else: It stands in for the network of relationships that allows us to have discourses that are not strictly private. Such a space is public because it is open to all, but also because the discussion that takes place there is public—that is, we discuss things as members of a community rather than as a collection of individuals.³

At its most abstract, the term loses all connection whatsoever to spatiality, and it becomes merely shorthand for a set of discursive practices or for the issues and relationships that bind us together as citizens. These strictly abstract uses are usually little more than tropes, using *space* to indicate that the discursive practices or relationships being discussed exist in more than a single point, actually extending across the social body; in other words, they are metaphors. As such, they can help us understand relationships between individuals in a social context, but not the relationship of individuals to their environment. Because it is abstract, the purely metaphorical use of *public space* divorces individuals from the specific characteristics of their local context, which means that we can only use it to talk about those relationships that are not mediated by that local context. In other words, using *public space* strictly metaphorically might help us understand how a public carries power, but not how space carries power. Used this way, the distinction between the metaphorical and literal uses of the term is too sharp.

Blurring the distinction a bit, I would argue that *public space* is still used metaphorically when it indicates a public that is spatially anchored while ignoring the influence that literal spaces have on human relationships. This is a public space that exists directly in the relationships between people; the environment in which those relationships occur does not carry any power of its own. Habermas and Arendt use this notion of public space to tell

their now-familiar stories of the rise and fall of the public realm. It is important that these stories are spatially anchored even though they do not explicitly deal with space, because that anchoring is exactly what allows Habermas and Arendt to present them as stories, as narratives involving change. While they are stories primarily about changes in human relationships, they are also stories about changes in spatial practices; the former could not happen without the latter—although the metaphorical use of *public space* tends to gloss over the power that changes in spatial practices exert over human relationships. If the public realm could exist independently of literal spaces, there is no reason to believe that it would change as the world around it changes.⁴ To say something about the individual's place in the world—in order to tell a story—we must take literal spaces into account even when we use *public space* metaphorically.

Although it is translated as “public sphere” rather than “public space,” Habermas's use of the term *Öffentlichkeit* captures the metaphorical use of *public space* well: *der Öffentlichkeit* is the web of institutional structures, public figures, and human relationships that are characterized by their publicity; it is a kind of discursive and relational space. According to Habermas (1991), the public sphere, which is the realm in which private people come together and engage each other in critical communication, was formed in the coffeehouses and salons of Great Britain and France in the eighteenth century; these places were centers of criticism, both literary and political. Habermas (1989) said that it is in the public sphere that public opinion can be formed, and that the public sphere is a mediator between society and the state, allowing the citizens to express their criticisms of the official political process.

This critical public sphere was in principle open to everyone, but in reality, it was based on the fiction that all human beings were also property owners. This fiction was necessary if the public sphere was to remain *public*: a public sphere that does not include everyone is not really a public sphere. In practice, Habermas argued, there were two criteria for admission to the public sphere: education and property ownership. Public space was thus bounded, both literally and metaphorically; only those who owned property could access it. Literally, this is because only property owners were allowed in the coffeehouses and salons where Habermas placed the public sphere. Metaphorically, it is because only property owners had private interests—the protection of their property—that could translate into a reasonable legislative agenda; they did not have to “leave their private existence behind to exercise their public role. For the private person, there was no break between *homme* and *citoyen*, as long as the *homme* was simultaneously an owner of private property who as *citoyen* was to protect the stability of the property order as a private one. Class interest was the basis of public opinion” (Habermas, 1991, p. 87). This is why, in Habermas's account (1989), early constitutions reflected the liberal public sphere; they protected the autonomy of the private sphere and circumscribed public power.

But constitutions also formalized the public sphere, making its functions explicit in the law. A result of this was that the state became the principal focus of public life; the organization and procedures of the state's institutions now became what was seen as public

(Habermas, 1991). In the long run, public authorities have come to act more in the private sphere, and social powers have come to act in the official political public sphere; the private and public spheres have become interpenetrated, and the public sphere has lost its function of critical publicity (Habermas, 1989, 1991). The private sphere has also been altered, according to Habermas: The intimate sphere used to be at the center of the private sphere, but it has now been pushed to the side and become more and more hidden from the world. At the same time, work, which used to be more private, has become more public (Habermas, 1991). With the formalization of the public sphere, Habermas argued, the private self becomes more vulnerable, because we can no longer take for granted that the private sphere will be protected from public interference or that we can take the critical perspectives we acquire in the public sphere back with us to the private one.

Arendt (1958) told a similar story about the decline of public space. The public realm, she argued, is the realm of action, of seeing and being seen by others—which is what, for us, constitutes our reality. The public realm, in other words, is a space of appearance, and “[we] always appear in a world which is a stage...” (2003, p.13). This space is above all metaphorical; appearance requires a literal space, of course, but what is important for Arendt was the appearance itself, not the space in which it occurs. Action, very much like a theater performance, is fleeting, and it exists only in the moment when it is performed. This is why action has to be protected, given a space in which its appearance is assured. This space, of course, is the public realm, which Arendt identified most strongly with the Greek *polis*. In the contemporary world, Arendt (1991) found the public realm of action in the spontaneous public spaces created by the “councils, *soviets* and *Räte*, which were to make their appearance in every genuine revolution throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (p. 249). But what characterizes these councils, together with Jefferson’s ward republics and the *sociétés révolutionnaires*, which also make up what Arendt called “the lost treasure of the revolutionary tradition,” is above all their impermanence. They cannot guarantee a space of appearance for the simple reason that their existence is as fleeting as the performances they are supposed to protect. And although Arendt failed to mention it, the councils of assembled citizens of the *polis* that she held out as an example of a more or less permanent public realm also did not operate continuously. These assemblies were not endangered like the revolutionary councils later would be, but the *polis* was not as permanent a public realm as the more everyday one of the *agora*.

Arendt associated the *agora* with work, with the process of creating an artificial world of objects that endows human life with continuity and permanence. It is this material world, the world created by *homo faber*, that connects us with those who came before us and those who will come after us. This is also a kind of public space for Arendt, but it is not a space of appearance; it is our common world. We appear in this common world as producers of objects, not as performers on a stage: The production of an object is not something we do in public—the object appears in the common world already finished, when the work of producing it is already done. This common world, the public space created by work, is necessary, Arendt argued, because it creates something fixed that ties us to other human beings across time, and in this way guarantees

that our actions and their meanings can be understood beyond the particular locality and instant they were performed.

In modernity, the third human activity, labor, has entered the public realm, and this has led to its decline. The public spaces of action and work are artificial; they are human constructs. Labor, on the other hand, is the activity of overcoming our biological needs, and when it enters the public realm, it brings with it not only consumption, the biological process of breaking down the world to uphold life, but also instrumentalism, valuing everything by its usefulness in serving our biological needs.⁵ Labor is also an essentially *private* activity: My biological needs are my own, and they connect me to others only insofar as they share the same private needs. In other words, labor does not create a common world or a space of appearances: To the extent that public space survives in a laborers' society, it is incidental, because it is more convenient or economical to fulfill some of our biological needs in the company of others. But without spaces in which to act publicly, and without meaningful forms of participation in public life, citizens shift their attention to the private sphere; the public realm becomes a place for private errands or to pass through from one enclave of privacy to another.

As Benhabib pointed out, Habermas's and Arendt's conceptions of public space are different—Habermas used a discursive model, in which citizens can deliberate over political decisions, whereas Arendt used an agonistic model, in which citizens can perform great actions in the company of others—but what they have in common is that they both use *public space* in a primarily metaphorical sense to tell a story of the decline of the public realm (Benhabib, 1992). These stories are similar in that they both focus on the transformation of certain integral relationships or discursive practices as the root cause of the contemporary loss of public space. I would argue that this focus is an artifact of thinking about public space metaphorically; if one thinks about public space literally, the story about the loss of public space becomes a different one.

Without dwelling for too long on these stories of the decline of the public realm, we can notice that although the public actions Habermas and Arendt described all are actions that take place in some form of physical space, the shape of that space is largely irrelevant to the perceived capacity to perform those actions—there is nothing about the coffeehouses or salons or the *polis* as such that specifically supports public space. That public space might just as well have appeared elsewhere. In this sense, the public space that Habermas and Arendt talked about is metaphorical: it *is* a physical space, but its shape is undefined and secondary—it does not affect the performance of the actions in it.⁶ In terms of power, this leads them to overemphasize the amount of power that can be drawn from a group of citizens simply coming together—and also to make that power seem independent from the local context—while underemphasizing the importance of the shape, location, accessibility, and history of, for example, the coffeehouses and salons in generating a public sphere. Habermas and Arendt needed to add a literal dimension to their metaphorical use of *public space*—otherwise they would not have been able to tell their stories—but it is also important to note that their stories are strangely unlocated: The public space they talked about does not depend on any

local context to give it shape or meaning. It exists outside of actually existing spaces; it can exist anywhere. This lack of location also means that Habermas and Arendt downplayed the influence that the local context will have on any public space, metaphorical or otherwise. By overlooking the way in which our environment supports or inhibits power, they also overlooked the possibility that their public spaces are not universal and cannot be transported everywhere; a metaphorical public space needs a literal, located space that can support it.

LITERAL PUBLIC SPACE

If the metaphorical use of *public space* refers to a network of communication and relationships, the literal use of the term is concerned with the physical space in which such a network might exist. Such a space is public not because the discussions or actions that take place there are necessarily public, but because the space as such is open without restricting access to anyone.⁷

Discussions using the term *public space* in a more literal sense, while also concerned about, for example, the balance between private and public life, are—for natural reasons—more concerned about the effect of the *shape* of physical space. A strictly literal discussion of public space would focus only on describing the shape of a public space, ignoring its effect on the people who use it. For this reason, *public space* in its strictly literal sense is not very interesting: a public space whose design does not take into account the effect it has on those who use it is of no value as a public space since it ignores the public.

All discussions of literal public space, then—except perhaps the purely descriptive—will have a metaphorical component, since the effect that the shape of a space has on those who use it includes the effect it has on their relationships and discussions. This means that the shape of public spaces takes on an explicitly political dimension. Mattson (1999), for example, tied democracy to the existence of literal public space: “Democracy requires places where citizens can gather together to discuss the issues of the day and work on solving problems. ... Throughout U.S. history, planners created town commons, central greens, and public squares to facilitate civic interaction. Public space was intended to galvanize democratic activities—especially the informal meetings that could produce discussion and deliberation” (p.133). Literal public spaces, then, carry metaphorical public space; depending on its design as well as its integration into the local environment and history, a literal public space can encourage or discourage the development of metaphorical public space.

Perhaps the most fundamental distinction underscoring how the way we can be together in a space influences the kinds of relationships and discussions we can have there is the distinction between public spaces which have developed naturally, largely unplanned, and public spaces which are planned, designed to be public spaces (Carr, 1992). This distinction is similar to the distinction Lefebvre makes between *representational space*, space that has been appropriated by everyday people for their own use, and *representations of space*, space that is constructed and imposed and that serves the purposes of those in power

(Lefebvre, 1991). From the perspective of those in power, it is tempting to assume that the former do not sustain meaningful metaphorical public spaces, because it is in the latter that we as citizens interact more directly with the state—for example, when we rally in front of City Hall. However, a city like Oakland, which is usually talked about as a troubled city, does have (often overlooked) well-functioning metaphorical public spaces, especially in neighborhoods with only representational space.

It is also important to note that representations of space tend to turn into representational space over time, as people shape the space according to their constantly evolving needs. The environment cannot determine human relationships, and as de Certeau (1984) pointed out, people always find ways of fitting their own, idiosyncratic spatial practices into sometimes hostile spaces that were not designed to accommodate such needs. The residents of San Francisco's Chinatown have taken Portsmouth Square, by itself a relatively drab concrete plaza, and turned it into a bustling community hub with an open-air market—thus creating a robust metaphorical public space that the literal public space otherwise might not support.

There are many possible types of public space, and the variety of public spaces is constantly expanding, but the addition of new forms of public space does not necessarily imply an expansion of public space as such. "Although this multiplicity of spaces suggests the persistence of public life in America, it is also indicative of a highly stratified society. Different spaces serve different social groups, and public spaces play increasingly specialized roles in most people's lives" (Carr, 1992, p. 67-68). For example, Stanford Industrial Park, like the later corporate campuses based on its model, is a public space only for well-educated white-collar workers. Findlay (1992) argued that Stanford Industrial Park embodies a public space endemic to the Western states: "magic kingdoms" segregated from the surrounding city, which serve not only as important landmarks in our mental maps of decentered cities but also to further isolate social classes from each other. Moreover, the new forms of public spaces that have developed in California and the West have helped shape distinctive metaphorical public spaces with distinctive power relations.

An obvious example of how these power relations play out is the now well-established story of how the kind of suburbanization most intimately associated with the growth of Los Angeles has encouraged a retreat from the public realm into the private realm, and from literal public spaces into private spaces. Suburbanization, according to this account, is a spatial reconfiguration of life to escape the commotion of the public realm. In a suburb, the focus of life is not on the street or the neighborhood, but inward, on the house. Since suburbs are more spread out than cities, one needs a car to get around, and a car is insulated from its environment in a way that a pedestrian is not—hence the possibility of chance sidewalk encounters decreases. Another side effect of the car is that the garage, an empty buffer space, has come to replace the quasi-public porch as the house's connection to the street. Instead of being directed toward the street, in the front yard, the life of the house is now directed toward the private space of the backyard (Buckley, 1992; Jackson, 1985).

Suburbia spatially detaches us from our neighbors by distributing the fragments of a city over an entire region, each fragment accessible only by car—which has the effect that life in suburbia is encapsulated, spent at home or in the car, and only rarely in the company of strangers. Since there is no street life to speak of in a car suburb, there is also very little room for spontaneous encounters or for exposure to a plurality of perspectives (Mumford, 1961). The effect of suburbanization, according to this argument, has been a segregation of the population into isolated, homogeneous enclaves such as Walnut Creek or Mission Viejo, thus destroying the effective plurality of the public realm—which also has the effect of curbing citizen participation in local government (Oliver, 2001). If I am surrounded in public by strangers who are just like me, the public realm is little more than an extended private realm. Thus, the retreat into the private realm is not merely a withdrawal from metaphorical public space; this retreat is accompanied by a fundamental transformation of literal public space. Like Habermas's and Arendt's stories, the story of suburbanization is about the decline of the public realm, but because its focus is literal rather than metaphorical, the story is a very different one: Rather than changes in social relationships pushing us into privacy, it is the environment that makes private life easier and public life more difficult.

What the story of suburbanization shows is that the shape of a space influences the human relationships that are mediated by it. As Bickford (2000) put it, "The built environment ... constructs intersubjectivity, and it is the form of intersubjective relations currently being generated and entrenched that is especially pernicious: the world is being constructed, quite literally, in ways that adversely affect how we regard politics and who we recognize as fellow citizens" (p. 356). More directly, the design of a space induces us to, for example, move through it quickly or to linger in the company of others. It is important not to overstate the case here: Space is not deterministic, it is not the *cause* of relationships or discussions; it does, however, affect what is possible (Hillier, 1996). Each space favors some types of relationships over others, thus encouraging certain behaviors and discouraging others; for this reason, space carries power—perhaps even the power of political ideas.⁸ Soja (1989) argued that the spatial fragmentation of the postmodern city—of which Los Angeles is the archetypal example—helps mask economic exploitation and depoliticize class and gender conflict. In other words, because of the nature of spatial relations typical to urban development in Southern California, metaphorical public space is deteriorating on the physical streets of the city.

The shape of physical space affects human interaction primarily because of how it influences movement; the way we move through, or stay in, a space has an effect on how we can come together in that space. A poorly designed public space will discourage people from lingering and spending time with others; at worst, the space will tend to impart a sense of dread in its occupants (Hillier, 1996). We know how to interpret spatial cues—at least within our own local context—and come to expect certain types of interactions in certain types of spaces. We modify our behavior to fit our environment—having a picnic and people watching are appropriate in a park, but not in a concert hall, while sitting at attention is normal in a concert hall, but unsettling in a park. The form of a literal public space

also forms the possibilities for the metaphorical public spaces that dwell in it. Space can push us toward publicity or toward privacy. Public space, which should bring us together, can, if so configured, isolate us—which does not necessarily mean that we are alone: We can be both agglomerated and isolated. For example, a small plaza set apart from the street and surrounded by office buildings is, as Sennett (1986) pointed out, dead space; it does not permit a multiplicity of functions and is merely space to be passed through.

The literal use of the term *public space*, then, is no less concerned with the social relationships that occur in public, or with the power dynamics of those relationships, than is the metaphorical use. Whereas metaphorical public space functions by relating and separating people in word and deed, literal public space relates and separates them physically. In metaphorical public space, the power that allows or denies us entry into the space is that of society or the state, which sets up barriers around participation based on economic or social status, ethnic background, gender, and so on. In literal public space, those barriers are physical, so that even though the same populations might be excluded, the powers that exclude them function very differently in metaphorical public space than in literal public space. In the former, power is exerted by the representatives of the state or society; the coercion is direct, taking the form of explicit prohibitions or instructions. In the latter, power excludes not by explicit prohibitions, but by making a space inaccessible—for example, Findlay's "magic kingdoms," which are easily accessible only to those who can afford a car.

The stories we tell about public space will be different depending on our perspective. The stories that Habermas and Arendt told about the decline of the public realm are based on reconfigurations of social categories, not on reconfigurations of physical space like the story about suburbanization. Stories from the perspective of metaphorical public space tend to focus on our coming together as a community or social body (and perhaps of losing that togetherness), while stories from the perspective of literal public space tend to focus on the erection of the boundaries and barriers that keep us from coming together.⁹

The approaches vary, but many of the questions of metaphorical and literal public space, although formulated differently, address the same concerns. One such concern, which is at the heart of how power operates differently in the different conceptions of public space, is the issue of the boundaries surrounding that public space.

THE BOUNDARIES OF PUBLIC SPACE

The issue of boundaries highlights the differences between metaphorical and literal public space: Both kinds of public space should, at least in principle, be open to all, but public space is always bounded. In both cases, the boundary separates those who are let in to the space from those who are not; however, the boundaries operate differently. In metaphorical public space, the boundary may restrict access based on citizenship, social or economic status, or other criteria of belonging; in literal public space, a physical barrier complicates entry: a wall, a gate, or a wide open space that must be crossed. In the former

case, the discriminatory power operates directly on us—we are told that we are unwelcome or compelled to stay away by the threat of force—whereas in the latter case power operates indirectly, through the proxy of spatial clues; we sense from the environment that we are unwelcome.¹⁰

Probably the most obvious boundary surrounding both kinds of public space is the boundary between the public and the private. Those who conceptualize public space metaphorically and those who conceptualize it literally are, as I have discussed, both concerned that public space is being transformed in a way that leads us into an excessively private existence. Related to this is the subdivision of public space based on function: parks are for recreation, malls are for shopping, residential areas are for living, and so on. We are allowed to access these specialized public spaces only if we fulfill the requirements of designated users of such spaces. What this means is that we are separated into separate public spaces not only spatially but also metaphorically, with some public spaces inhabited exclusively by the wealthy and others exclusively by the poor. But this kind of specialization waters down the very concept of public space: A public space, literal or metaphorical, that effectively excludes all but a single, homogeneous group is not public in any meaningful sense; it is simply an extension of the private realm. Unless a literal public space can sustain a multiplicity of functions and diversity of users, it will not be able to sustain a metaphorical public space either.

This is of particular concern if, as Findlay suggested, self-contained “magic kingdoms” are the typical public spaces of California and the West; not only are these “magic kingdoms” inaccessible except to users designated as legitimate, they also blur the boundary between public and private space. The clearest example of this is probably still the original Magic Kingdom: Disneyland seems to function as a public space—it has streets and parks and little squares—but it is of course a privately owned space and regulated as such. For example, the mobility of visitors is highly controlled, both by landscaping cues and by having to ride in cars in the attractions themselves. The metaphorical aspect of this “public” space is also regulated; the employees interact with the visitors using preapproved scripts (where customers become guests, job interviews become auditions, and lines become pre-entertainment areas) (Bryman, 1995).

Disney’s public space is not a democratic one, because it is controlled by Disney and there is no room for an independent metaphorical public space. It cannot be a *public* space in any meaningful sense, because there are no citizens. As Sorkin (1992) pointed out: “The theme park presents its happy regulated vision of pleasure—all those artfully hoodwinking forms—as a substitute for the democratic public realm, and it does so appealingly by stripping troubled urbanity of its sting, of the presence of the poor, of crime, of dirt, of work. In the ‘public’ spaces of the theme park or the shopping mall, speech itself is restricted: there are no demonstrations in Disneyland” (p. xv). As a literal space, Disneyland is neither public nor private; it is a hybrid of some sort. But as a metaphorical space, it is strictly private, forbidding the creation of an independent public realm. In this way, Disneyland highlights the danger of conflating metaphorical and literal public space: Since the literal space of Disneyland at the very least appears to be, and in many ways functions as, a

hybrid of public and private space, it is easy to assume that the metaphorical public space—the space of direct human relationships—is also a hybrid of public and private. But that is not the case, and the deceptive hybridity of the literal space masks the one-sided regulatory power of the metaphorical space.

Accessibility—such as the difficulty in getting to Disneyland without a car and also the steep entrance fee—is another way to regulate the boundary around public space. A space that is difficult for the public to access—either because of some physical obstruction such as a fence, or because of some symbolic obstruction such as a gatekeeper determining who will be allowed in the space, or because its location is inaccessible by some modes of transportation—is not entirely public (Carr, 1992). All public space has boundaries of this sort; some members of the public are always excluded from any given public space. As necessary as these boundaries are—a space without boundaries is no space at all—they often serve to exclude unwanted, but otherwise legitimate, members of the public. Davis (1992), for example, argued that the removal of virtually all pedestrian access routes to the newly redeveloped Bunker Hill area of Los Angeles from the surrounding working-class neighborhoods is a form of “spatial apartheid,” effectively excluding the lower classes from what has become a playground for the upper and middle classes.

Boundaries, of course, are not merely literal: One can exclude undesirable elements of society either by erecting a boundary around the space itself or by erecting a boundary around who will be counted as a member of the public. This is precisely the issue in defining the “right to the city,” i.e., whether the city belongs to all its users or if some users are more legitimate than others.

Mitchell (1995) used the example of redevelopment plans for People’s Park in Berkeley to illustrate this point. In 1989, the University of California, which owns the land People’s Park sits on, wanted to build volleyball courts for its students. The park, the University argued, was underutilized, and building these volleyball courts would help reappropriate the park for students and middle-class residents of Berkeley. But the park was not underutilized at all, Mitchell stated: It was one of the few areas in the San Francisco Bay Area where homeless people could feel safe; it was underutilized only if the experience of the marginalized is discounted as illegitimate.

This naturally leads to a discussion of what public space should be. Mitchell (1995) wrote:

Activists and the homeless people who used the Park promoted a vision of a space marked by free interaction and the absence of coercion by powerful institutions. For them, public space was an unconstrained space within which political movements can organize and expand into wider arenas. The vision of representatives of the University (not to mention planners in many cities) was quite different. Theirs was one of open space for recreation and entertainment, subject to usage by an appropriate public that is *allowed* in. Public space thus constituted a controlled and orderly *retreat* where a properly behaved public might experience the spectacle of the city. (p. 115)

Is public space something that is open to all, a fundamentally political space with all the disorder and frustration that come with such pluralism? Or is it a planned space, some-

thing ordered and safe, in which citizens defined as legitimate by the state should feel comfortable and safe to enjoy the public benefits of the city?

For Mitchell, this question is primarily about public space in its literal sense. But it is also a question relevant to metaphorical public space: Who has the right to participate in the relationships and discussions that constitute our metaphorical public spaces? Once we decide to exclude certain groups from our public space—literal or metaphorical—they are no longer legitimate members of the public. Feldman (2004) argued that public spaces have been reformulated as consumptive and leisure spaces, which means that those who cannot participate in the activities of a metaphorical public space defined by consumption—i.e., the homeless—must be excluded from the literal public space as well. “Ordinances against aggressive panhandling in places such as Los Angeles, Santa Monica, and Baltimore map the postindustrial city; in constructing new fields of illegalities these ordinances seek to construct a danger- and anxiety-free zone around the pleasures and pathways of consumptive space and its legitimate middle-class users. Postindustrial redevelopment surrounds urban space by new walls that divide consumptive pleasure and choice from poverty and homelessness” (p. 41). In this way, the boundary around a metaphorical public space—in this case, the boundary around who should be counted as a member of the public—also shapes literal public space: If the homeless cannot consume, they cannot be part of the public. But if the users of People’s Park were seen as legitimate members of the public, People’s Park would not be a contested public space; it would be a park like any other, in which members of the public idle in nonproductive activities. This is why the issue of boundaries is so central to any discussion of public space; the drawing of a boundary determines who will be allowed to perform on the public stage and who will be condemned to the shadows of an invisible, strictly private existence.

CONCLUSION

As I have tried to show, one’s approach to public space will differ depending on whether one uses the term metaphorically or literally. Despite the differences in approach, however, many of the concerns—the balance between the public and the private, the fragmentation of contemporary public space, the boundaries around public space—are shared by both approaches. This seems to indicate that the two approaches cannot easily be separated, and that perhaps the metaphorical and literal uses of the term *public space* are merely two sides of the same coin.

This is, I believe, largely the case. We cannot use public space as a metaphor for certain kinds of public relationships without at least implicitly tying these relationships to actions that are somehow located and spatially dependent. Simply put, without a physical space in which to meet, the public sphere or public realm that Habermas and Arendt described could not exist. The opposite is also true: When we discuss the characteristics of literal public spaces, we do so because we are interested in how the shape of these spaces influences the types of relationships that become possible in

them. If we did not care about how the shape of space affects the possibilities for social interaction, we would talk about the spaces in which we are together with strangers as common or merely shared rather than public—or we would define them strictly by their function as commercial, transitional, or recreational.

In other words, if we want to make normative claims about public space, we have to mix the metaphorical and literal uses of the term to some extent. The two kinds of public space are not separate; they bleed into each other. When the environment changes, the possibilities for human relationships change as well. However, we must also be careful in trying too hard to reconcile the metaphorical and literal conceptions of public space, because the kinds of power implied by the two conceptions are different—but because the different kinds of public space bleed into each other, the different kinds of power will also bleed into each other. But the direct coercion of metaphorical public space and the subtle nudging of literal public space must be addressed through different means: Urban renewal will not by itself create a vibrant metaphorical public space, and a revolution cannot correct spatial injustices.

We should be careful, then, not to let *public space* do too much heavy lifting for us, conceptually speaking, because even though it is an unavoidable term, it is also a slippery one. Metaphorically, we sometimes use *public space* even when we are talking about relationships that are in no way spatially dependent; and literally, we sometimes fall into the trap of making physical space deterministic of human relationships. In the former case, the metaphor carries with it connotations of a space and a community that are misleading and perhaps dangerous. In the latter case, we may be tempted to ignore the tougher job of addressing social relationships by hoping that a correctly designed space can fix all human conflicts—Bentham's high hopes for his Panopticon come to mind.¹¹ But no space can make us free. As Foucault (1986) pointed out, different configurations of space encourage different configurations of power, but we can never escape power—not even in heterotopias. No space is ever neutral, and it is foolish to believe that the design of a literal public space will not influence metaphorical public space.¹² However, political actions cannot be designed into a space: It is possible to design spaces that encourage political actions, and it is possible to design spaces that discourage political actions, but a physical public space is not by itself a guarantee of a well-functioning metaphorical public space, and vice versa. Also, politics cannot be designed into space because all spaces have a history; identical spaces will have different meanings—and engender different metaphorical public spaces—in different places.

It is impossible to separate literal public space from metaphorical public space, except as an intellectual exercise. This is precisely why we have to be so careful about the way in which we inevitably mix the two meanings of *public space*. The danger, when we conflate the two meanings of the term, is that we lean on the imagined neutrality of space and forget about power, and that we reify space as if its existence were independent of human relations.

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NOTES

- 1 As Alexander (1977) argued: "Any environment which requires that a person pay attention to it constantly is as bad for a person who knows it, as for a stranger. A good environment is one which is easy to understand, without conscious attention" (p. 482).
- 2 In the former case, there is an immediately identifiable authority (or representative of that authority) present, some entity against which one can direct one's objections, while in the latter case, the authority responsible for shaping public space is not present and is perhaps not even immediately identifiable. Also, the power that goes on directly between human beings can be clear and detailed, providing specific instructions or prohibitions, whereas the power mediated by the environment can never directly instruct or prohibit, only suggest possibilities.

- 3 This does not mean that such discussions cannot take place in public space, metaphorical or not. That, however, is not what makes the space public; a metaphorical public space that plays host to an essentially private discussion, no matter how many people participate in it, is perhaps better thought of as a space held in common. As Arendt (1958) pointed out, "What the public realm considers irrelevant can have such an extraordinary and infectious charm that a whole people may adopt it as their way of life, without for that reason changing its essentially private character. ... This enlargement of the private, the enchantment, as it were, of a whole people, does not make it public..." (p. 52).
- 4 One might argue that the Internet makes possible a public realm that is independent of literal spaces; however, the difference is merely that the Internet eliminates the need for a central public space where we meet in person. As members of an Internet public realm, we are still located and affected by our local context: for example, the draconian censorship of the Internet in places such as China creates Internet public realms of a very different kind from the ones in places where the Internet is not policed to the same extent.
- 5 This is why Arendt (1993) was so critical of entertainment replacing "higher" forms of culture (see *The Crisis in Culture*).
- 6 Of course, some of the spaces *are* well defined—for example, Habermas's coffee-houses and salons—but there is, in Habermas's account, nothing about the spaces themselves that helped generate the public sphere that appeared there. Similarly, the spontaneous public spaces Arendt discussed—the various forms of councils—are not linked to specific spaces (although Arendt still assumed that we have to live together, literally). The public *space* that exists in these public *spaces* is thus metaphorical rather than literal.
- 7 At least in principle, that is: Many if not most public spaces do restrict access, either by being closed certain hours or by implicitly or explicitly welcoming only some parts of the population and excluding others.
- 8 The power of a given space to carry ideas is contingent on many factors, of course, the most important of which is culture: A space that seems cold and uninviting from the perspective of one culture may be warm and welcoming from the perspective of another.
- 9 Young (2000), for example, was concerned that the decreasing importance of literal public spaces in which we can come into contact with people who are different from us—what she called *embodied* public space—is leading to a deterioration of the metaphorical public spaces of deliberation and participation, the kind of spaces which protect against a public life based strictly on private interests (see chapter 6).

- 10 In most cases, the distinction is not this clear-cut, for example, under Jim Crow segregation, where signs informed people which public spaces they could access. Likewise, the presence of security guards in, for example, shopping malls is a direct form of power to exclude the homeless, the indigent, and other undesirables.
- 11 Bentham (1995) introduced his invention with the following words: "Morals reformed - health preserved - industry invigorated - instruction diffused - public burdens lightened - Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock - the Gordian knot of the Poor-Laws are not cut, but untied - all by a simple idea in Architecture!" (p. 29)
- 12 Low (2000) described how the redesign of the Parque Central in San José, Costa Rica, was an attempt to "'clean up' (implying clean up socially as well as physically) this central public space by removing the architectural affordances—activity-enabling furnishings such as the arbor, the trees, and the benches—that previously invited older pensioners to spend the day. The cleanup also included restricting commercial activities to other areas of the city, removing the vendors and shoeshine men who had worked there for more than forty years. With these restrictive regulations, new forms of crime and criminals have appropriated the space and taken over the local ecology. It is ironic, to say the least, that the removal of the vendors and shoeshine men, which was intended to increase safety, may in fact have decreased it because of the loss of the local surveillance and sociability they provided" (pp.193-94).

BIOGRAPHY

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 - *Citations within text - use author-date system e.g. (Jones, 2001)*
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