

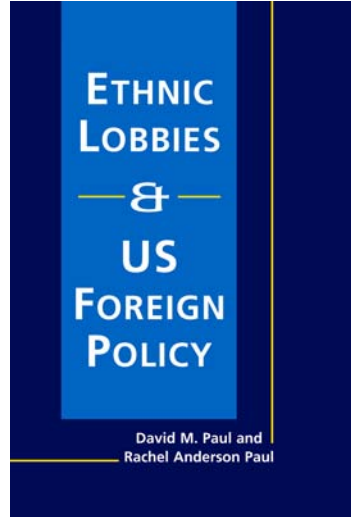
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Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy

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1

Introduction

In March 1999, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) expanded to include three new members: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. While US president Bill Clinton and US secretary of state Madeleine Albright were jubilant, not all world leaders shared their enthusiasm, and many groused that the US-led effort to expand NATO had less to do with national and geopolitical security, and more to do with domestic, ethnic group politics. In 1997, Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien complained to Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene and Luxembourg prime minister Jean-Claude Juncker (and inadvertently into an open microphone) that NATO expansion was occurring because “ethnic voting blocks in the United States are pushing their cause” (Harris 1997, A24). Chrétien went on to object that NATO expansion “has nothing to do with world security. It’s because in Chicago, Mayor [Richard] Daley controls lots of votes for the [Democratic] nomination” (as quoted in Harris 1997, A24). Even Casimir Lenard, the director of the Polish American Congress and a key supporter of NATO expansion, seemed to agree that President Clinton had electoral reasons for spearheading the NATO expansion: “He needed votes. . . . That’s how it happened” (as quoted in Longworth 1998).

NATO expansion of these three states and the eventual expansion to include more Central European, Eastern European, and Baltic states would seem to be a clear example of ethnic American groups driving US foreign policy. Over the past several decades, the ability and power of ethnic interest groups to influence US foreign policy have become accepted as fact by scholars, journalists, and analysts. For example, Samuel Huntington argues that, in addition to commercial interests, “transnational and nonnational ethnic interests have come to dominate foreign policy” (1997). Likewise, the late George F. Kennan asserted that there have been numerous instances since World War II where “ethnic minorities have brought pressures with a

view to influencing foreign policy on behalf of what they perceive as the interests of their former mother country” (1977, 6). Tony Smith claims that “ethnic groups play a larger role in the making of U.S. foreign policy than is widely recognized” (2000, 1), while Eric Uslaner contends, “foreign policy decisions increasingly reflect ethnic interests rather than some overarching sense of national interest” (2002, 356). In a similar fashion, numerous journalists report that ethnic lobbies influence significantly the formulation of US foreign policy (see Felton 1984b; Doherty 1995a, 1996b; Longworth 1998).

Yet others contend that foreign policy decisions are determined by other actors, and these scholars give little attention to the influence of ethnic lobbies and other interest groups. Although he acknowledges that ethnic groups are the “most noticeable” of the organizations active in foreign affairs and defense policy, John Tierney asserts that “generally speaking . . . the record of ethnic group lobbying success is far less imposing, to the point that most analysts seem to agree that the impact of such groups on American foreign policy is minimal” (1994, 118). Peter Haas emphasizes that knowledge-based experts play a key role in affecting foreign policy because they articulate “the cause-and-effect relationship of complex problems, helping states identify their interests, framing the issues for collective debate, proposing specific policies, and identifying salient points for negotiation” (1992, 2). Still other scholars prescribe to the median-voter model, contending that elected officials strive to gauge public opinion and develop policies that are similar to the policy preferences of most voters (see Jacobs and Page 2005 for review). If the median-voter model is correct, ethnic groups should have little sway over elected officials unless they comprise a sizable portion of a politician’s district.

So, which perspective is most correct? Are US policymakers, and hence foreign policy, beholden to ethnic groups? Or do ethnic groups play a relatively modest role in the formulation of US policies? This study aims to help scholars, analysts, and citizens understand better the role that ethnic interest groups play in formulating foreign policy. While business, labor, and public interest groups are widely studied, there is a relative dearth of research on ethnic lobbies. Historically, many scholars ignored ethnic interest groups in part because of the perception that interest groups, in general, have a modest impact on US foreign policy (Paul 1999). While domestic politics have long been characterized as a competition among contending interests, foreign policy remained relatively insulated from group pressures for much of the history of the United States. Yet, globalization has increased the influence of foreign dynamics on traditional domestic realms, such as trade, labor, and the environment. This, combined with the end of the Cold War, has resulted in an environment in which ethnic groups are more likely to deem lobbying as advantageous and necessary.

A major question addressed by this project is: Which ethnic lobbies are most powerful, and why? Although the power of ethnic interest groups has come under increasing scrutiny over the past several decades, little systematic research has been completed that examines a cross section of ethnic groups and lobbies.¹ The Israeli, Armenian, Greek, Irish, and Cuban lobbies are routinely cited by policy analysts as having a disproportionate amount of political sway. For example, Uslaner (2002) states that the Israeli lobby is the most powerful ethnic lobby, followed by the Cuban and Greek lobbies. David Ottaway and Dan Morgan stated in 1999 that the Jewish American and Armenian American lobbies are “two of the best organized and financed Washington lobbies” (A15). Elyse Semerdjian reported in 1997 that the three most effective ethnic lobbies were the Israeli, Greek, and Armenian lobbies. However, no quantitative data exist that measure the ordinal influence of these and other ethnic lobbies, and the lack of data inhibits the systematic study of why some ethnic groups are more powerful than others. For example, in the absence of a ranking of the most powerful ethnic lobbies, it is impossible to use quantitative methods to determine which factors help explain the relative influence of these lobbies. Even if the conclusion is that ethnic groups exercise less influence than their critics charge, we may gain a better understanding of the role ethnic groups do play in the policymaking process. Even scholars who caution that ethnic groups are not as powerful as their detractors claim still assert that “ethnicity has become an essential ingredient in the domestic politics” of the United States and other states (Goldberg 1990, 3). A more rigorous analysis of ethnic groups will also allow us to evaluate the applicability of broad interest group theories to different kinds of interest groups. For example, we can examine if ethnic interest groups behave like other grassroots or mass-membership organizations.

A second question asked in this book is: How does the power of ethnic lobbies compare to business, labor, elites, and public opinion? If scholars are to understand the nature of the foreign and intermestic² policy choruses, and determine if they sing in a pluralistic, elitist, or majoritarian key, it is important to examine all sections of the choir. For example, the analysis by Jacobs and Page (2005) largely excludes ethnic groups, while the study by Powlick (1995) does not distinguish between business, labor, and ethnic groups. We hope to contribute to understanding the pluralistic puzzle better by determining what role ethnic groups and other actors actually play in the policymaking process.

Further, this study contributes to our understanding of democratic governance, by seeking to answer the question of who gets to influence foreign policy, and ascertaining the degree to which the public can affect the foreign policy-making process. If ethnic American groups are *too* powerful, then democratic governance may be held hostage by a small minority of

Americans. On the other hand, if ethnic American groups have very little influence, then democratic governance may also suffer, since the policy-making process is unresponsive to citizens.

In addition, it is hoped that this study enriches the interest group literature by better conceptualizing and measuring influence, and we contend that the context of the group's goals and activities is critical to understanding the relative power of the group. Specifically, we assert that groups that are defending the status quo have a strategic advantage and, hence, will be perceived as being more powerful than groups attempting to alter the status quo. Further, like Smith (2000), we believe that the political and social context affects the ability of ethnic interest groups to influence the policymaking process. The terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent war on terrorism may have reduced the ability of some or all ethnic groups to influence foreign policy.

Finally, like Smith and DeConde, we hope to make a contribution to the normative debate on the implications of ethnic group activity. The power of ethnic lobbies to influence policymaking is an issue of substantive importance to both scholars and practitioners. Although there may be benefits of ethnic group involvement in foreign policy formulation, such as bringing new ideas to the policymaking process generated by previously marginalized groups, many contend that "the negative consequences of ethnic involvement may well outweigh the undoubted benefits this activism at times confers on America in world affairs" (Smith 2000, 2). For example, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt created a firestorm of controversy by asserting that the policies advocated by many Jewish Americans and the wider Israeli lobby actually "jeopardize U.S. national security" (2007, 8). Moreover, eyeing the success of ethnic groups such as Jewish Americans and Armenian Americans, other ethnic groups (such as Indian Americans and Pakistani Americans) are trying to increase their impact on US foreign policy making (see Pomper and Chatterjee 2000; Morgan and Merida 1997; McIntire 2006). In the words of George Kemp: "As different ethnic groups achieve new prominence in the United States, the diversity of foreign policy concerns will increase, and so too will the overlap between foreign policy and domestic issues" (1999, 163). In short, critics are concerned that as these new ethnic American groups enter the policymaking arena, their voices will further impair and cloud the formulation of American foreign policy.

The findings presented in this book may counterbalance some of these apprehensions. We do not disagree with Smith's assertion that ethnic lobbies have greater access in foreign and intermestic policy making today than, say, in 1940. However, we are not convinced that this increased access is detrimental, or that ethnic groups as a whole have too much influence in the policy-making process. Indeed, there is evidence that ethnic groups can pose an important countervailing force to business interests and the lobbies of foreign

governments. For example, ethnic lobbies have brought increased attention to human rights abuses, and efforts by ethnic Americans have made US immigration policy more equitable by easing restrictions on non-European immigrants. The findings also confirm that new ethnic American groups are entering the policymaking process, but the study found little evidence that their efforts have an overwhelming influence on US foreign policy. The hope is that this study will enable scholars and practitioners to better judge the relative and contextual influence of ethnic groups when developing normative judgments of that influence.

■ **The Contemporary Foreign Policy–Making Environment, Ethnic Groups, and Pluralism**

Although contemporary scholars acknowledge that ethnic groups have long sought to influence foreign policy, many scholars who studied foreign policy during the twentieth century virtually ignored ethnic groups and other domestic actors, considering them to be irrelevant to foreign policy making. This was due in part to the Cold War, which helped establish a foreign policy consensus that featured “a layer of political leadership that in large measure agreed on the ends and means of U.S. foreign policy, an attentive public that followed this leadership, and a mostly inert, mass public generally uninterested and uninvolved in foreign affairs, but nevertheless hostile to communism” (Melanson 2005).³ Often, the strength of this consensus left little room for domestic actors to influence the foreign policy process. However, the Vietnam War and the end of the Cold War eroded the consensus, yielding a splintered range of opinions regarding US foreign affairs that required presidents to form coalitions in an attempt to construct a new foreign policy consensus (Melanson 2005). Likewise, Robert Entman (2004) asserts that the ability of presidents to successfully influence public opinion has declined since the end of the Cold War because the media are providing greater independent coverage of foreign policy issues.

The lack of a post–Cold War consensus and changes in the geopolitical environment created new opportunities for ethnic groups to affect the foreign policy–making process since there is no longer a singular “national interest” driving US policymaking. For example, Smith posits that, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, ethnic Americans are more interested in being active in world affairs than the general public, and the opening of the political system at home has allowed greater ethnic group influence in foreign affairs. Likewise, Michael Clough argues that “the regionalization of global policy making, the impact of ethnicity on American foreign policy and the rise of powerful global issue groups” have fundamentally changed the foreign policy–making process (2001, 2). Walt (2005) contends that even

the war on Al Qaida and terror does not provide the overarching objective to limit the ability of domestic forces—such as ethnic diasporas—from setting foreign policy priorities.

Further, as distinctions between the foreign and domestic policy spheres became increasingly interconnected and nebulous, many foreign policy issues began affecting Americans economically, leading to an increase in domestic groups seeking to influence foreign policy (Uslaner 1991). Manning (1977) describes this blurred distinction between domestic and foreign policy as “intermestic,” and many analysts believe frameworks that exclude domestic actors are not valid depictions of the foreign policy process (see, for example, Adler and Haas 1992, 367).

In addition, institutional changes in the legislative branch may be an important component to the changing nature of foreign policy making. While Congress yielded much of its foreign policy authority to the president during the 1950s and 1960s, Congress became much more active in foreign affairs in the 1970s in large part because of the unpopular Vietnam War (Lindsay 1994). Further, congressional reforms implemented in the 1970s weakened the power of committee chairs, relaxed the jurisdictional boundaries of committees, and allowed individual members of Congress greater ability to shape legislation through offering floor amendments. In addition, Congress increased its institutional capacity to conduct research by creating entities such as the Congressional Research Service and dramatically increasing the size of Capitol Hill staffs (Melanson 2005). These institutional changes and reforms afford members of Congress much greater opportunities to become foreign policy entrepreneurs, even if they do not sit on the relevant standing committees or possess seniority (Tierney 1994; Melanson 2005). As a result, “Congress today involves itself in a dizzying array of foreign policy issues . . . [and] congressional activism on foreign policy promises to continue in the coming years” (Lindsay 1994, 1). These institutional changes also provide greater incentives for external actors—such as interest groups, think tanks, and even foreign governments—to lobby Congress in an attempt to shape US foreign policy.

Scholars offer diverging judgments, however, on the extent to which Congress does, in fact, determine foreign policy. Some assert that Congress’s effect is minimal, as the legislative branch is apt to acquiesce to executive initiatives (Koh 1988; Hinkley 1994). Others disagree, positing that “while Congress enjoys greater success in influencing domestic policy, it remains an important force in the making of foreign policy” (Lindsay 1994, 141). However, James Lindsay contends that the influence of Congress varies greatly depending on the nature of the foreign policy issue. For example, Congress has little influence on foreign policy crises: instead, the president has far greater sway and members of Congress have “little choice but to follow the president’s lead” (Lindsay 1994, 147). Nonetheless, Congress can affect

strategic policies that outline basic objectives and tactics of foreign policy, such as many diplomatic and defense matters, because the Senate must consent to treaties, Congress has substantial power in terms of regulating commerce, and Congress establishes defense appropriations (Lindsay 1994, 153). Congress enjoys even greater influence with structural policies, such as foreign aid, immigration, and military procurements.

While ethnic groups target Congress because it is often easier to access, the executive branch is not immune from interest group pressures either. For example, Kemp (1999) asserts that concerns of ethnic groups and other domestic groups, such as environmental groups, influence the staff of the National Security Council (NSC). "U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba, South Africa, Israel, or Eastern Europe has to take into account the important domestic constituencies with special interests in these areas" (Kemp 1999, 163).

Ethnic interest groups can affect policymaking for the same reasons that domestic interest groups can influence legislative and bureaucratic decisionmaking: while Americans have long been suspicious of interest groups, the American political system was designed to allow interest groups access to the policymaking process. James Madison, the chief architect of the US Constitution, warned of the "mischief of faction," arguing that factions were a threat to the public good and to personal liberties. Madison (1787) defined a faction as "a number of citizens . . . a majority or a minority . . . adverse to the rights of other citizens," a broad definition that could entail virtually all interest groups today, as well as political parties. Some leaders and members of interest groups may cringe at the phrase "adverse to the rights of other citizens," but the observation is astute: politics involves trade-offs, and championing one issue or right often comes at the expense of another. Few, if any, groups are championing issues that do not infringe on others in at least some capacity: for example, land preservation comes at the expense of property rights. Madison warned that, at their extreme, factions posed two dangers to the nation: they could threaten the public good by promoting the selfish interests of the faction at the expense of the broader public, or they could jeopardize the stability of the political system by encouraging divisiveness within the nation.

Despite these concerns, Madison did not believe factions should be banished, for then "the cure is worse than the disease." Instead, he reasoned that the political process should be designed to control the effects of factions, and he crafted a political system with multiple access points that allow interested parties to affect policymaking in two legislative chambers and the executive branch.⁴ Madison hoped that the political system would allow any interested parties to join the political fray, thus ensuring that no one faction could or would dominate the governing process. Political scientists call this competition among interests and groups in policymaking *pluralism*, and many argue that US policymaking is the result of pluralism and

not majoritarianism. That is, policymaking does not reflect the majority will of the population: instead, it is a reflection of the political struggle between competing interests.

A criticism of pluralism is that, at times, there is very little competition among interests as some groups and organizations dominate the policymaking process. In such cases, those with power often argue there is nothing disturbing about their influence, since other groups are free to form and attempt to alter policy outcomes. Some even justify their influence on normative grounds, stating that those with power *ought* to dominate the policymaking process. For example, in defending the influence of the Israel lobby, Mitchell Bard contends that “pluralism does not assume that all interests are equal. In fact, most interests are unequal and it is the most powerful, that is, the one that enjoys the balance of lobbying power, which should dominate the market of political ideas” (1991, 5). Not everyone agrees with Bard’s assessment. For example, Mearsheimer and Walt argue that while the Israel lobby is simply a collection of powerful interest groups—and not “some sort of cabal or conspiracy”—the lobby has pursued policies that “make little sense on either strategic or moral grounds” (2007, 111–112). As such, they dispute Bard’s belief that the strong necessarily should dominate the foreign policy-making process.

■ Explaining Interest Group Formation

Pluralism is a major paradigm in political science, and political scientists spent much of the twentieth century developing and critiquing the concept. For example, David Truman (1951) argued that as society changes and becomes more complex, new interests form and new groups organize as a result. Nonetheless, not all new interests will translate into new groups: in the case of some causes, interests will remain latent and groups will remain unfounded. However, if a latent interest is threatened by a disturbance, then the interest is likely to organize itself in order to mobilize other like-minded individuals and protect the interest. Truman’s *disturbance theory* hypothesizes that interest groups are created in response to social or economic crises in order to make demands of government. In addition, disturbances can help organizations gain new members, often quickly, as the success of a perceived enemy can motivate individuals to join a group and fight the enemy. For example, membership in environmental groups increased during the Ronald Reagan administration, as latent environmentalists became active environmentalists in the face of a perceived threat (Ainsworth 2002). Truman believed the competition among interest groups and the mobilization of new groups would eventually result in an equilibrium in the policymaking process to the extent that new groups respond to crises and balance the demands of

other groups. Truman's work provided the core foundation of modern pluralist theory: pluralist politics involves the mobilization of interest groups, with these groups representing different interests and blocs in society; and organized interests and policymakers will engage in bargaining and compromise, thereby ensuring that public policy reflects the preferences of society as a whole.

However, other political scientists posited that group formation and maintenance are by no means guaranteed. Mancur Olson argued that groups often work to obtain collective or public goods, which he defined as "any good such that, if any person . . . in a group . . . consumes it, it cannot be feasibly withheld from others in that group" (1965, 14). For Olson, *individual rationality* trumps the likelihood of individuals working together for collective good and thus prevents some groups from forming: an individual understands that if the good is acquired by the group, then the person will be able to consume the good regardless of whether he or she contributed to its attainment. Many individuals, knowing that they will be able to enjoy the good regardless of their efforts, will choose not to work toward achieving the common good. As a result, the common good is often not achieved because too few individuals contribute to its realization. Clean air is often cited as a classic example of the collective action problem. Individuals may desire clean air, but believe that their actions alone will not determine if the air is clean or not. Individuals also understand they will not be denied the cleaner air if it is achieved. As a result, when faced with the added inconvenience of carpooling or riding a bus, they choose not to change their behavior, and the public good is not achieved. Olson contended that groups must use selective material benefits, benefits that will be given to members and withheld from nonmembers, to induce individuals to join the group.

Others have argued that the Olsonian view, while powerful, does not take into account the full spectrum of benefits that interest groups can offer members. Robert Salisbury (1969) extended Olson's theory by asserting that groups use material, solidarity, and purposive rewards to attract and retain members. For example, the AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired People) uses material rewards such as discounted health insurance to entice Americans over the age of 50 to join their group. Unions provide individuals with social, solidarity, and fraternal rewards that are noticeably absent for nonmembers: indeed, workers who do not join a union may be subject to social stigma, a kind of negative social reward. Many groups use purposive rewards, a recognition that an individual's efforts are critical to the success of the group, to encourage membership and donations. Ideological groups like the Christian Coalition and public interest groups like Amnesty International often appeal to individuals to "make a difference" by joining their cause. Of course, groups often use a mix of rewards (Salisbury 1969; Moe 1980, 1981). For example, the Sierra Club, in addition to providing purposive rewards, may

give members material rewards like an attractive calendar, and unions often provide a combination of all three rewards. Research by Terry Moe (1980) provides evidence that purposive incentives are the most important inducement for noneconomically based political groups (like ethnic groups), while selective material benefits are most important for business and labor groups, although purposive incentives are also important for these organizations.

Like all interest groups, ethnic groups face the same problems as they attempt to achieve their own collective goods, from securing foreign aid, to changing immigration policy, to promoting human rights. Most individuals believe their actions alone will not help the group achieve its goals, so they choose not to join the group and work to achieve the collective good. Because of this, ethnic organizations are likely to develop selective incentives to build and maintain membership, and groups that develop such rewards are likely to have a greater and more active membership base. For example, many ethnic groups are not overtly political, instead acting as fraternal organizations (and, thus, providing social rewards to members). However, ethnic groups may provide material benefits (such as calendars, newsletters, and discounted insurance) to members, as well as purposive benefits. Many ethnic groups, like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) or the Armenian National Committee of America, use purposive rewards to encourage brethren to fight on behalf of their ancestral homeland, donate to a political action committee, and/or contact their members of Congress. However, ethnonational groups face a particularly difficult burden, since they often are attempting to capitalize on a sense of unity with a homeland that many or most members of the ethnic group have never visited or seen.

Entrepreneurs can be critical to group formation and maintenance, since they can provide the initial capital needed to overcome the collective action problem (Salisbury 1969). Salisbury notes that while crises may be important in providing an environment for mobilization, entrepreneurial leadership provides the catalyst for group formation and maintenance. Entrepreneurs can develop the selective incentives to attract and retain members, helping ensure that the group does not wither. An individual (or group of individuals) may form a group for the same reasons that people join groups: for purposive (such as a desire to affect foreign policy), for social (such as a desire to promote community), or for material reasons (such as being paid to be the organization's president).

Part of the power of ethnicity is that it relies on deep attachment to a collective identity, so much so that individual and collective identities can become fused: "when the community is threatened, so is the individual, while the success of a community enhances its members' sense of self-worth" (Esman 1994, 15). But the relationships among individuals, their ethnicity, and ethnic groups are complex and dynamic. Ethnic groups and ethnic leaders

may have an exogenous effect on ethnic communities and these collective identities: both groups and elites can boost an ethnic community's pride, and groups and elites can draw on (some might say exploit) potential threats to the ethnic community to mobilize ethnic brethren.⁵ In addition, ethnic groups may provide incentives for individuals to maintain ties to the greater community, thereby strengthening communal ties among ethnic individuals. For example, a Greek American group may use tensions between Greece and Turkey to encourage Greek Americans to join and remain active in the Hellenic organization. The Greek group may send action alerts to Greek Americans urging them to help protect ancestral Greece by contacting their members of Congress to enact an arms embargo against Turkey, and to encourage Congress to continue giving military and foreign aid to Greece. The Greek organization may remind members and potential members that their letters to Congress make a difference, as do their donations to a Greek American political action committee, which allows the organization to reward its friends and punish its enemies in Congress. Through its activities, the Greek organization helps to provide a purposive benefit to Greek Americans, one which may help unite the ethnic community beyond the independent effect of the tensions between Greece and Turkey. Because of this, the Greek organization may have an exogenous impact on the Greek American ethnic community.

■ Maintaining Interest Groups

Interest groups can take many different forms, from small and elite organizations to large mass-based entities. Salisbury (1984) distinguishes between "membership" and "institutional" groups, asserting that these two types of groups have different motivations and differing levels of resources available to them. *Membership or grassroots organizations* are composed of individuals who share a similar policy goal. These groups are often latent, and an organization will not form unless someone takes action to overcome the collective action problem. Pamela Oliver (1984) contends that leaders are especially important to the formation of grassroots organizations, and these leaders are often motivated by the belief that no one else will strive to solve the group's problems. Because of this, leaders must act because no one else will. The main political power of grassroots organizations derives from their main resource: people, or more specifically, people who vote (Gerber 1999). In contrast, *institutional organizations*—such as the US Chamber of Commerce, the American Association of Universities, and the National Governors Association—do not focus on developing a grassroots base, instead inviting a select few to join the organization. Often, members have a financial incentive to join. Olson argued such groups are privileged: they will

form naturally, because individuals recognize they will achieve more by working together. The main resource these groups enjoy is financial. Unions are grassroots organizations, while business groups are institutional groups. Ethnic interest groups can fall into either category, although it is expected that ethnic organizations will be more grassroots in nature than institutional since grassroots mobilization plays such a key component in ethnic group influence.

Retaining membership is often a challenge for grassroots groups. While some individuals will join a group and remain a member for decades, others will join once and never renew their membership. Preserving the membership base can be a costly endeavor for groups, and they rely upon marketing techniques such as direct mail to attract new members needed to replace lapsed memberships. Some groups, even groups that view and promote themselves as grassroots organizations, overcome the collective action problem via a patron and client relationship in which a few resource-rich individuals or organizations provide economic and political sponsorship to the organization (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Walker 1983). This strategy mitigates or even negates the need for amassing a large membership in order to finance a successful interest group. Instead, entrepreneurs rely more heavily upon patronage for funding than on amassing membership. Often rewarded with a title (such as a "Gold Member" or part of the "President's Circle") and given recognition in the organization's literature and on its website, patrons can provide significant amounts of funding that subsidize the organization's activity and take pressure off the organization to use its resources to find new members. An analogy is that grassroots organizations are like a sieve and its members are grains of sand poured into the sieve: while new members join, there are always existing members falling out of the group (Johnson 1997). Patrons are akin to stones that help to fill the sieve, thereby reducing (but not eliminating) the need to find new sand to add to the sieve.⁶ In doing so, patrons help organizations focus their energies elsewhere. Smith hypothesizes that the threshold for an ethnic interest group to gain access to, and thus have an opportunity to affect, the policymaking process is a budget of "perhaps" \$1 million and 250,000 voters across a few congressional districts (2000). Patrons can help make achieving that monetary threshold relatively easy, allowing the organization to devote its resources to mobilizing its membership.

Like patrons, government grants and support can also be critical to the survival of groups, because grants often help offset the overhead costs for organizations, as well as subsidize the salaries of group staffers. Several ethnic organizations, including the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and the Armenian Assembly of America, have received millions of dollars from the federal government, either in terms of grants or as payments for services (Newhouse 1992; Dobbs 2001). In addition to helping

subsidize groups, the government has played a role in the formation of organizations. For example, according to Smith (2000), in 1953 the State Department asked the president of the World Jewish Conference to “oversee the founding of a single representative institution. The result was the creation of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, expected to articulate general policy and to be in contact with the President, and the upgrading of AIPAC . . . to operationalize policy and deal with the Congress” (111). Likewise, Patrick Haney and Walt Vanderbush (1999) contend that CANF was formed, in part, at the suggestion of Richard V. Allen, Reagan’s national security advisor from 1981 to 1982.

In sum, the study of ethnic political movements is driven by questions concerning ethnic identity maintenance, social and ethnic mobilization, and interest group and social movement participation. To explain the existence and success of ethnic interest groups, it is necessary to develop an understanding of how these groups maintain support given expectations that ethnicity should become less politically important as the world modernizes. Maintaining ethnic identity and convincing ethnic brethren that political participation is important and relevant are necessary to ethnic interest group survival. Understanding the ways that leaders activate ethnic masses over time helps elucidate the reasons for ethnic identity persistence and ethnic interest group success. The above discussion of the interest group literature provides several insights that may explain the formation of ethnic interest groups. First, disturbances may impel ethnic political mobilization, but elites and entrepreneurs may also play a critical role in facilitating collective action by an ethnoracial community. Second, selective incentives, especially purposive and solidarity incentives, are likely to play a role in explaining ethnic mobilization.

■ Power, Influence, and the Status Quo

Many of the charges leveled against ethnic interest groups are also directed at pluralism more broadly: critics of pluralism often assert that interest groups have become too powerful in the policymaking process, and, as a result, governance suffers (see Lowi 1969; Rauch 1994). In order to assess this claim, the term “power” must be defined more precisely. Traditionally, power is conceptualized as the ability of person A to get person B to do something that B would not otherwise do, and some scholars contend that the study of power is best operationalized by examining conflicts between actors and groups over important issues (see Bachrach and Baratz 1962 and Lukes 1974 for reviews and critiques). However, others assert that this conceptualization of power is unnecessarily limited. For example, in what they label as the second face of power, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz contend that “power is

also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A" (1962, 918). That is, A has the ability to suppress debate and conflict over certain issues. In a similar manner, E. E. Schattschneider (1960) argues that the powerful will attempt to limit the scope of conflict and thus keep certain issues out of the policymaking process.

While this project examines visible conflicts over agenda control and policymaking, the study of power is nonetheless fraught with difficulties. For example, a member of Congress may not want to admit that an interest group has power over the congressperson. Indeed, the only way to truly test the power of the interest group is to remove the group and see if the behavior of the member of Congress is any different in the group's absence. Political scientists do not have this luxury and must develop other methods of measuring power. Power is an abstract, and tangible measures must be identified.

A central proposition to this research is that some groups have a strategic advantage because they wish to protect existing policies or the status quo. One of the truisms of the US policymaking process is that it is easier for groups to protect existing policies than it is for groups to secure new policies. The openness of the policymaking process creates multiple points at which groups can veto new policies, thus making it easier for groups to protect the status quo than to change it (Hayes 1992). As a result, policymaking tends to be incremental in nature, with few fundamental changes from year to year. Like a military unit perched on top of a hill, groups that seek to protect the status quo possess a tactical advantage and find it easier to defend their position than groups that are attempting to alter existing policies. As such, it is expected a priori that those groups that work to protect the status quo are in a more powerful position, and these groups will be perceived as more influential than those groups that desire to change the status quo.

But is the perception of power a reality? For example, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is often cited as the most powerful ethnic interest group in the United States. Indeed, in a 2001 survey conducted by *Fortune* magazine, AIPAC was ranked as the fourth most powerful lobbying group in Washington, trailing only the National Rifle Association, AARP, and the National Federation of Independent Business (Birnbaum 2001). Likewise, Uslander asserts: "American Jews are distinctive in their ability to affect foreign policy. They have established the most prominent and best-endowed [ethnic] lobby in Washington" (2002, 358). It is clear that the United States has long supported Israel: President Harry S Truman backed the partition plan in 1947, and the United States recognized Israel immediately upon its declaration of independence in 1948 (DeConde 1992; Mearsheimer and Walt 2007). What is less clear is why this relationship has

remained so strong. In the words of Mearsheimer and Walt, “With the partial exception of Soviet support for Cuba, it is hard to think of another instance where one country has provided another with a similar level of material aid over such an extended period. . . . the sheer magnitude of U.S. aid [to Israel] is remarkable” (2007, 36). Is this strong relationship between the United States and Israel due to the power of AIPAC, or is it due to other considerations, such as the strategic importance of Israel in the volatile Middle East? Would US policy toward Israel be the same if there was not a single “Jew in America”?²⁷ Scholars disagree on whether US policy toward Israel is driven by the Jewish American lobby or by strategic interests, and the possibility remains that AIPAC may or may not be as influential as some might think. Since we cannot reverse time, remove AIPAC from the policy-making process, and see if US policy toward Israel is the same, we cannot tell the true power of AIPAC. However, we do know that AIPAC does have a strategic advantage in the current policymaking environment, at least in comparison to groups that may oppose strong US relations with Israel, because it is protecting the status quo. This advantage helps increase the perceived and real influence of the group.

The fact that groups have different goals in terms of protecting or changing the status quo likely means that groups have different strategies. It may also mean that groups may have different types of influence. A strategy of maintaining the status quo requires the ability to influence at least one veto point. Such veto points may be quite small: perhaps a sympathetic committee chair is all that is needed to block changes to existing policy. More likely, maintaining groups wish to have access to several key actors across several institutions in order to influence policy. Ideally, these policymakers would control access to the policymaking agenda, so that proposals to change the status quo can be prevented from even making it to a vote.

In contrast, a strategy for changing the status quo requires the ability to build and marshal enough support to overcome veto points across a number of institutions. Amendments to laws or changes in appropriations require legislative approval, and the legislative process is arduous to navigate. As well as the constitutional veto points of legislation requiring the approval of both chambers of Congress and of the president, “the internal rules and procedures of Congress provide additional veto points where minorities may block or amend threatening proposals” (Hayes 1992, 35). Successful legislation requires the approval of successive majorities at the subcommittee, committee, and floor levels of both the House and the Senate. If the Senate and House versions of the bill are not identical, then the bills must be reconciled and the resulting legislation must be approved by both chambers. Failure at any one of these points kills the measure, and opponents will concentrate their resources on the locations they believe are most hostile to the legislation and thus most likely to obstruct its passage. Groups that

desire to change the status quo must secure the support of majorities of both chambers of Congress, as well as majorities in the relevant subcommittees and committees in both the House and the Senate, a harder task than for those seeking status quo goals.

Groups may also be required to implement a mixed strategy: one that attempts to both secure the support of successive majorities and protect the status quo. For example, Jewish Americans who wish to promote US relations with Israel have a strategic advantage: strong US-Israeli relations currently exist, so these ethnic groups are promoting the status quo. Nonetheless, the appropriations process is an annual endeavor, and American groups that support Israel must work to ensure that the United States maintains its monetary and military commitment to the state of Israel. This is a different task than, say, an Armenian American organization that is attempting to block a change in US policy toward Azerbaijan or a Cuban American organization that is attempting to protect the US trade embargo of Cuba. Unless those policies have sunset clauses, they remain the status quo indefinitely.

To date, scholars who examine ethnic interest groups have analyzed more traditional predictors of group influence, such as the size of the ethnic community, the financial resources of the community and its groups, and the degree to which these groups are well organized and institutionalized. However, a better appreciation for the role that the status quo plays in ethnic group politics can aid in our understanding of why some ethnic interest groups appear quite powerful, while others do not.

■ Exploring Numerous Issue Realms

A unique feature of this study is the examination of numerous foreign and intermestic issue realms in which ethnic groups participate and attempt to influence policymaking. By doing so, we can better understand if ethnic groups have influence in some realms more than others, and better address if ethnic groups have influence at all in a specific policy area. After all, simply because an organization, lobby, or lobbying sector is interested in swaying policies does not mean that any influence is achieved. This is, in part, because ethnic communities and organizations are only one set of actors interested in these policy realms.

Many ethnic American communities are interested in influencing foreign policy, and lobbies attempt to affect relations between the United States and the ethnic ancestral homeland. For example, Irish Americans are credited with pushing the Clinton administration to become engaged in the Northern Ireland peace process, and the African American community is credited with influencing the Clinton administration's decision to intervene in Haiti (Glas-tris et al. 1997; Schlesinger 1997). In some cases, ethnic communities try to

strengthen ties between the United States and the ancestral homeland, encouraging the United States to develop stronger relations with the ancestral state. For example, during the Balkan conflict in the 1990s, Serb Americans chided the United States for being pro-Muslim and pro-Croat during the Balkan War, and Serb American groups such as the Serbian Unity Congress pushed for stronger US relations with Serbia (Paul 1999; Doherty 1995b). Jewish, Greek, and Indian American organizations desire for the United States to maintain strong relations with Israel, Greece, and India, respectively. In other cases, ethnic lobbies encourage the United States to isolate, pressure, or punish enemies of the ancestral state. For example, Armenian Americans helped enact an embargo against Azerbaijan in the 1990s, and the Greek and Armenian lobbies have long attempted to weaken US relations with Turkey (Watanabe 1984; Doherty 1995a; Smith 2000). In 2000, Eritrean Americans rallied for the United States to push Ethiopia to accept the peace plan developed by the Organization of African Unity to end the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (Melvin and Graham 2000). Taiwanese American groups worry that US relations with China have grown too strong. In 1999, Indian Americans were credited with mounting a successful grassroots campaign that pushed Congress and the Clinton administration to urge Pakistan to stop its incursion into the disputed Kashmir province (Lancaster 2000). During the Cold War, Central and Eastern European groups regarded the leaders of their ancestral homelands as puppet regimes, and the communities encouraged the United States to take a hard line against the Communist states (Shain 1994). The same is true today with most Cuban groups.

In addition to analyzing foreign policy per se, we surveyed policymakers about the influence of ethnic groups regarding six other policy realms: foreign aid, human rights, immigration, military and security, oil and energy, and trade policy. *Foreign aid* is central to foreign policy because aid is used as a carrot to reward foreign states, and ethnic groups are frequently advocates for increasing or maintaining aid to their ancestral homelands. Foreign aid can also be an intensely political issue since it involves distributing a finite amount of dollars, and increasing aid to some countries or regions often results in cuts in aid to other regions (Dobbs 2001). Jewish American and other pro-Israeli groups are credited by scholars and journalists with helping to maintain high levels of US aid to Israel, and Israel is by far the largest recipient of US foreign aid (Frankel 2006). Armenian American groups are also very interested in foreign aid, and Tony Smith asserts that “it is widely agreed that the high levels of U.S. aid to Armenia (the second highest per capita in the world, after Israel) . . . would be inconceivable” were it not for the Armenian American lobby (2000, 69–70; see also Dobbs 2001). Greek groups have lobbied for years for foreign aid to Cyprus and that aid to Greece should be proportional to US aid to Turkey by a 7:10 ratio

(Felton 1984b; Doherty 1995a). In the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central and Eastern European groups advocated for greater foreign aid to nations formally under Soviet influence to help build their democratic institutions.

Ethnic groups and other actors in the foreign policy-making process often attempt to link foreign aid to *human rights* policies. For example, in the mid-1990s the Greek and Armenian American lobbies, humanitarian groups, and key members of Congress attempted to restrict aid to Turkey unless Ankara dropped its blockade of humanitarian aid to Armenia. In addition, two other human rights issues were cited as eroding support for aid to Turkey: Turkey's counterinsurgency campaign against the Kurds, and Ankara's refusal to recognize the Armenian genocide (Doherty 1995a, 1996b). In the 1990s, Indian Americans fought attempts by Representative Dan Burton (R-IN) to limit foreign aid to India because of its human rights record in Kashmir and toward India's Sikh minority (Doherty 1996b; Pomper and Chatterjee 2000). Irish American groups worked for more than a decade to prevent job discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland by linking the MacBride Principles to the foreign aid authorization bill (Kenworthy 1990; Doherty 1996a). Many Cuban American groups argue that the embargo against the Castro regime should be continued because of its record on civil liberties and human rights (Gugliotta 1998). Human rights concerns are not always linked to foreign aid, and ethnic groups can encourage the United States to pressure foreign regimes to curb human rights abuses. For example, Eritrean Americans and Ethiopian Americans have lobbied the United States to take a tougher stance against their former homelands after civil liberties and civil rights have been curtailed by ruling regimes (Bahrapour 2006; Snyder 2006). Both African American and Jewish American organizations worked to raise awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, in hopes of pressing the United States and UN to take action to halt the ethnic genocide being carried out in the region (Banerjee 2006).

While defense policies are often viewed as distinct from foreign policy, the two are very much entangled (Lindsay 1994), and *military and security* policies are not immune from the pressures of ethnic (and other domestic) groups. Since the birth of Israel, the Israeli American lobby has advocated for the United States to support Israel with large amounts of military assistance and equipment, and Jewish and Arab American groups have wrangled for decades over US arms sales to Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and other countries in the region (DeConde 1992; Boustany 1990; Mearsheimer and Walt 2007). Greek Americans lobbied successfully for an arms embargo against Turkey after the latter invaded Cyprus in 1974. Before the embargo was rescinded in 1978, Turkey closed several dozen US bases and listening posts in retaliation. In 1995 during the Balkan wars, a coalition of Muslim, Jewish, and Arab American groups advocated for an end to the

arms embargo against Bosnia, while Serb American organizations charged the American media with being biased against the Serb side of the conflict (Doherty 1995b; Curtiss 1999). Pakistani Americans opposed the halt of military aid to Pakistan in 1990 because of the country's growing nuclear program, and Pakistani Americans targeted the chief architect of the measure, Senator Larry Pressler (R-SD), for defeat in 1996. The result was an election proxy war between Pressler and Democratic challenger Tim Johnson, with Indian Americans pouring at least \$150,000 into Pressler's reelection campaign, and Pakistani Americans giving at least that amount to Johnson (Morgan and Merida 1997). Indian Americans seek stronger military ties between the United States and India, and some Indian Americans even advocated for the United States to resume military sales to both India and Pakistan in the late 1990s in order to begin building military ties between the United States and India (USINPAC 2007a; Lancaster 1999).

Like foreign aid, *trade* and trading sanctions can be used as tools of foreign policy. Although punitive trading measures are not usually welcomed by the executive branch, sanctions are often sought by ethnic groups and members of Congress (Doherty 1997). Cuban Americans successfully lobbied for the passage of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996, which expanded sanctions against the Castro regime. Also in 1996, the Israeli lobby helped win sanctions against Iran, although the lobby lost in its bid to keep sanctions against Libya out of the bill, and human rights activists were also successful in imposing sanctions against new investment in Myanmar (Doherty 1997). Other ethnic groups have encouraged trade with their ancestral homeland. For example, Mexican American groups and members of Congress provided critical support for the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993, although Mexican American members of Congress were credited with forcing changes to the agreement, including programmatic funding benefiting US residents who live close to the US-Mexico border (Glastris et al. 1997; Shain 1999). At times, ethnic-based groups can be split over trade. For example, although Vietnamese Americans traditionally took a hard line against opening relations with Vietnam, it appears that the Vietnamese American community was split in 1994 over whether President Clinton should lift the US embargo against Vietnam (Burruss 1994; Scroggins 1994; Sylvester 1994; Wisby 1994).⁸ In 2005, Hispanic groups were divided over the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), with some Hispanic organizations such as the League of United Latin American Citizens opposing the free trade pact, and business-based groups, such as the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, supporting the agreement (Holzer 2005).

As with trade policies, policymaking toward *oil and energy* is of keen interest to business organizations. Nonetheless, ethnic groups can and do weigh in on these policies. For example, by promoting economic sanctions

against Iran, the Israeli lobby affected oil and energy policy, since Iran is a large exporter of petroleum. The 1996 sanctions against Iran were amended to include Libya, another exporter of petroleum. Frequently cited as a classic example of an ethnic entanglement into foreign policy, Armenian groups opposed the Clinton administration attempts to give US assistance to Azerbaijan, a nation that controls expansive oil reserves in the Caspian region (Doherty 1995a; Longworth 1998; Dobbs 2001).

Finally, as has been the case throughout much of the history of the United States, *immigration* is an important issue that bridges domestic and foreign policymaking. Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan argue that “without too much exaggeration it could be stated that the immigration process is the single most important determinant of American foreign policy. This process regulates the ethnic composition of the American electorate. Foreign policy responds to that ethnic composition” (1975, 23). There is little doubt that, since immigration holds the promise of bringing family members to the United States, it is a highly salient and weighty issue for many ethnic groups. Even ethnic communities that exhibit little interest in foreign affairs and policies related to their ancestral homeland may try to influence immigration policy. For example, with the exception of recent trade pacts, Mexican Americans generally ignore US-Mexican relations and focus their energies on domestic issues (Jones-Correa 2002). However, Mexican American organizations have been, and still are, very active in immigration policy. Smith states that “observers agree that Mexican Americans were active in shaping the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 and the Immigration Act of 1990” (2000, 75), and Mexican and Hispanic groups are very active today regarding immigration reform. They are not alone, and numerous ethnic groups oppose cuts to (and support increases of) legal immigration of family members of recent immigrants to the United States, while other ethnic groups lobby for a greater number of work visas for high-skilled workers coming from countries such as India (Idelson 1996). Irish Americans successfully included a provision in the Immigration Act of 1990 requiring that 40 percent of the 40,000 visas distributed by contest in 1991 be given to Irish applicants (Kamen 1991). Immigration is also a politically charged issue that can disrupt traditional voting patterns. For example, Cuban Americans, Korean Americans, and Vietnamese Americans, three ethnic groups that traditionally lean Republican, all displayed hostility toward a 1996 plan by Republican leaders to reduce the number of family visas granted (Idelson 1996).

In summary, many ethnic interest groups are interested in affecting not just foreign policy and foreign aid allocations, but a host of other connected realms, including immigration, military and security, trade, and oil and energy policy. But what effects do ethnic groups have on these policies? The next section details how this project examined the scope and nature of ethnic group influence in the policymaking process.

■ Research Design: Exploring the Comparative Role of Ethnic Groups

There is little doubt that ethnic American groups try to influence the policy-making process regarding the above foreign and intermestic policy realms. What is much less apparent is the degree to which ethnic groups do, in fact, enjoy influence over these policies. We used a number of techniques to examine the comparative role of ethnic groups in policymaking, including surveys and in-depth interviews of policymakers and examining journalistic accounts and analysis of the foreign policy-making process. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to explore why some ethnic groups have greater influence in the foreign policy-making process.

One of the main arguments of this book is that ethnic groups are not the only voices that attempt to sway foreign policy. Another interest group sector, that of business and trade organizations, is often characterized as having a disproportionate amount of sway in US policymaking and is also very interested in US foreign policy. For example, Robert Keohane (1984) demonstrates that domestic oil producers and business groups greatly influenced postwar foreign policy and trade agreements. Jeffrey Frieden (1996) argues that peak business associations and business groups are able to influence trade policy through the legislative branch. In his 1997 polemic, Samuel Huntington argues: "In case after case, country after country, the dictates of commercialism have prevailed over other purposes including human rights, democracy, alliance relationships, maintaining the balance of power, technology export controls, and other strategic and political considerations." Business interests and ethnic lobbies are at times very much opposed to one another. As expected, business groups do not support trade restrictions, and often business organizations are at odds with ethnic and humanitarian groups over trade sanctions and embargos (Sammon 1995; Doherty 1997). Yet, business groups and ethnic lobbies can be allies when their interests coincide: business groups have worked with Indian American organizations to increase trade with India and expand the number of visas for high-tech workers (Pomper and Chatterjee 2000; Idelson 1996). Likewise, business groups and companies like Boeing coordinated with the Central and Eastern European American lobby to support the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), since the enlargement could lead to more sales of US-made arms and technology (Longworth 1998).

In addition, foreign governments and other foreign principals attempt to influence US policies by penetrating the American domestic political process (Walt 2005). Although these actors are forbidden from making campaign contributions, foreign lobbies conduct expensive lobbying and public relations campaigns, some of which are headed by former members of Congress (Albert 2001; Rothstein 2006). For example, since 2000 the government of

Turkey hired former chair of the House Appropriations Committee Bob Livingston (R-LA), former chair of the House Rules Committee Gerald Solomon (R-NY), and former Democratic leader Dick Gephardt (D-MO) to fight bills that call for the recognition of the Armenian genocide (Schmitt 2000; O'Brien 2007). Some scholars assert that foreign entities can influence US foreign policy substantially in their own right (Hrebenar and Thomas 1995; Hula 1995). However, Walt (2005) contends that foreign states are much more likely to sway US policies if "they join forces with sympathetic domestic interest groups—and especially ethnic diasporas—in order to encourage closer ties than might otherwise occur" (195). Indeed, Walt contends the US political system is "especially receptive to foreign manipulation" because there are "a wide range of media outlets, a tradition of free speech and interest-group politics, and a divided system of government offering multiple channels of influence" (2005, 197). Foreign states, especially those that share cultural and political similarities with the United States, can mobilize a sympathetic diaspora within the United States and "exploit the basic dynamics of interest-group politics": interest groups comprised of enthusiastic supporters are likely to be accommodated by policymakers in the absence of strong, countervailing opposition groups (198). Walt contends that Israel has been the most successful in mobilizing Jewish Americans and other social groups on its behalf, but other prominent examples of transnational penetration include Greek, Armenian, Taiwanese, Korean, and Indian efforts.

Further complicating analysis is the fact that ethnic lobbies, organizations, and citizens are not just trying to influence elected leaders: there is ample evidence of elected officials working to mobilize and influence ethnic communities. Both Democrats and Republicans court recent immigrant groups in hopes of convincing new citizens to support their candidates. While mobilizing ethnic communities has a long history in the United States, the growth of immigration over the past several decades, coupled with the competitiveness of the last several election cycles, has led both parties to step up their efforts to register, court, and mobilize new citizens (Tillotson 2004). Elected officials also court ethnic groups to support and mobilize grassroots support for legislation. For example, President George W. Bush wooed Hispanic groups in his effort to pass CAFTA in 2005, and Bush administration officials mobilized Indian American organizations the following year to win congressional approval of the US-India Nuclear Civilian Agreement (Weisman 2005).

It is important to remember that an ethnic lobby that desires to influence foreign policy is likely to be only one voice in the decisionmaking process, as business groups, ideological organizations, human rights groups, unions, and even other ethnic lobbies may try to influence policy outcomes. Further, ethnic lobbies face a significant disadvantage compared to business organizations: there are far more business groups, they tend to be very organized

and engaged in policymaking, and these organizations have far greater financial resources than other types of lobbying and advocacy groups (Schlozman and Tierney 1986; Berry 1997). Because of this, some scholars argue that while business interests may not get everything they want, “they get a great deal” (Lindblom 1977, 187).

Like other mass-based organizations, ethnic groups do have one resource that many business organizations lack—an ability to tap a grassroots network of concerned voters (see Gerber 1999). Additionally, if a policy is salient to an ethnic community, then the issue may mobilize ethnic members to participate more in the electoral and policymaking process; not only can these individuals affect electoral outcomes, but they may be mobilized to participate in a grassroots lobbying campaign to influence the legislative process. Indeed, the issue may be so important that it drives individuals to behave like “single-issue voters,” who will ignore partisanship and other issues and make a vote decision based on the candidate stances on a lone, important issue (see Congleton 1991; Abramowitz 1995).

However, despite institutional and policymaking shifts that increase the influence of individual legislators in the foreign policy-making process, foreign policy making is still very much centered in the executive branch (Weissman 1995), a branch that, while not immune from domestic pressure groups, is nonetheless far more difficult to access than Congress. Furthermore, American ethnic groups are minority groups, usually lacking significant representation within this policymaking process. Even scholars concerned with the ability of ethnic lobbies to influence foreign policy unduly acknowledge that ethnic minorities are usually underrepresented in the foreign policy-making process, which has long featured an “overwhelming predominance of Euro Americans” (Smith 2000, 9; see also DeConde 1992). Indeed, when ethnic minorities do ascend to the highest levels of the foreign policy-making process, it is newsworthy: take, for instance, Colin Powell’s appointment to secretary of state in 2001, or the elections of Mel Martinez (R-FL), Barack Obama (D-IL), and Ken Salazar (D-CO) to the US Senate in 2004.⁹

For these reasons, it is hypothesized that ethnic groups, as a class of interest groups, do not dominate the foreign policy process or enjoy greater influence than other domestic actors, like business groups. That is not to say that ethnic lobbies can have no influence, but that as a category of special interest groups, the influence of ethnic groups does not exceed the influence of other domestic actors in the foreign policy-making process.

■ Identifying Ethnic Organizations

In order to address the objectives of this project, we examined ethnic American interest groups and their effect on the policymaking process from a

number of different angles. As a first step, ethnic American groups that exhibited some interest in the foreign or intermestic policymaking realms, such as trade, immigration, or foreign policy, were identified. Specifically, we searched for ethnic-based membership organizations that met one of two institutional criteria: (1) the group representing the ethnicity was using a Washington lobbyist, or (2) the self-identified ethnic group made campaign contributions to a federal office seeker since 1998. Our logic is that to influence the policymaking process effectively, an ethnic community will need some degree of presence in Washington, DC. A federal political action committee (PAC) or a representative who is registered to lobby helps to meet that threshold.

To identify organizations that employed a Washington lobbyist, electronic searches were conducted in 2004 and 2006 of *Washington Representatives* for ethnic-based organizations using multiple keywords to ensure that all relevant groups were identified. For example, we searched for the terms *Greek, Greece, and Hellenic* to find organizations that serve Greek Americans. Business organizations and trade groups, like the United States–New Zealand Council and the Egyptian Exporters Association, were not included in the population since they are not grassroots organizations. Likewise, non-US groups, such as the Pakistan Human Development Fund and Cameroonian National Congress, were not included, since they are not membership organizations that cater to Americans.

To identify campaign contributions to federal candidates, we searched Federal Election Commission archives in 2004 and 2006 for reports filed by ethnic-based PACs since 1998. As with the earlier search, we used a multiple keyword search to ensure that all relevant groups were identified. We also searched the website for the Center for Responsive Politics (www.opensecrets.org), which tracks PACs, other campaign contributions, and lobbying expenditures using the same criteria.

Combined, the searches identified over eighty-five groups or organizations representing thirty-eight ethnicities. Undoubtedly, our search conditions excluded some ethnicities that are truly grassroots in nature, such as Sri Lankan Americans or Estonian Americans, both of which were identified by a few policymakers interviewed for this project as ethnic groups that had contacted them. Nonetheless, we believe the criteria yielded a valid inventory of the most active ethnic lobbies in US foreign policy. We then collected data on these groups and lobbies, including PAC contributions, lobbying expenditures, and their efforts to mount grassroots campaigns to influence policymakers.

■ **Policymaker Survey**

A central component to this project is an in-depth survey of policymakers. Before the in-depth survey was implemented, we conducted a pilot study in

2004, and questionnaires were mailed to members of Congress, key congressional staffers, and ethnic interest group leaders and lobbyists (see Paul and Paul 2005). The questionnaire measured broad perceptions regarding the ability of ethnic groups to influence US policymaking in general and in several specific areas, including immigration, energy and oil policy, trade policy, domestic and foreign aid, military and security policy, civil rights, and human rights. The survey also asked respondents to rate the influence on a scale of 0–100 of each of the ethnic lobbies we identified as being active in foreign or intermestic policymaking processes.

In order to better understand the degree to which ethnic groups can influence the policymaking process, as well as appreciate which groups enjoy more influence than others, we then conducted an in-depth survey of policymakers and ethnic group leaders. Between August 2005 and March 2007, fifty-four members of Congress, congressional staffers, officials at cabinet agencies, interest group leaders, and other foreign policy actors were interviewed to examine the influence of ethnic groups on foreign policy making. We believe the survey provides insight into the role ethnic groups play in the foreign policy-making process during this time period. For the survey, we randomly selected twenty-five members of Congress and we also asked to interview fifteen members of Congress who are cited as champions of ethnic interest groups, critics of ethnic interest group involvement in foreign or trade policies, or who are especially interested in foreign affairs. In addition, we selected fifty congressional offices and asked to interview the staffer assigned to foreign affairs, the legislative director, or the chief of staff; and we interviewed committee staffers who are assigned to the House Committee on International Relations and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and their subcommittees. Our sample of twenty-eight Capitol Hill policymakers included fifteen Democrats and thirteen Republicans, representing urban, suburban, rural, and mixed districts in ten states.¹⁰ We also identified thirty-five career professionals in the Department of State and two other federal agencies and asked to interview these bureaucrats.¹¹ Finally, we identified several nonelected elites involved in foreign policy and interviewed one of these elites. In all, forty-one policymakers were interviewed (Table 1.1) for a response rate of 27 percent.¹² Collectively, we believe these members of Congress, congressional staffers, committee staffers, and career professionals represent a very good sample of policymakers¹³ involved in foreign and intermestic policies: on average, the respondents had 12.9 years of experience with their current employers and possessed 14.2 years of foreign policy experience.¹⁴ Respondents were given the option of receiving the interview questions ahead of the interview, and the interviews lasted anywhere from 20 to 60 minutes, with the modal interview taking 30 minutes. Interviews were not recorded, and our notes were transcribed immediately following the interview. Most staffers and bureaucrats requested to remain completely anonymous for the project, and several respondents

Table 1.1 Position and Ideology of In-Depth Interview Participants

Position of Respondent	Number Interviewed
Member of Congress	4
Legislative director or chief of staff	7
Senior legislative assistant or legislative assistant	7
Committee staffer	10
Agency careerist	11
Agency appointee	1
Nonelected elite	1
Ethnic group leader	13
Total number of respondents	54

Ideological Perspective of Policymakers	Number Interviewed
Extremely liberal	0
Somewhat liberal	13
Slightly liberal	7
Moderate	7
Slightly conservative	4
Somewhat conservative	6
Extremely conservative	2
Refused	2
Total number of policymakers	41

Note: Ideological data on ethnic group leaders were not collected.

stated that the answers given were more candid because their anonymity was guaranteed.

The policymakers who participated in our study provided thoughtful, and in many cases quite detailed, answers to our questions. Many of the policymakers spoke of life experiences that prompted their interest in, and helped to shape their perspectives regarding, foreign affairs. Several spoke of an interest in their own ethnicity or becoming interested in foreign affairs because one of their parents was an immigrant. Others cited work overseas, internships with the State Department, or educational opportunities overseas as prompting an interest in foreign policy. Several policymakers cited service in the military as influencing their interest in, and perspectives of, foreign affairs.

In addition, we interviewed thirteen leaders of major ethnic American groups. Like the interviews of policymakers, the interviews of ethnic leaders were conducted either face-to-face or by phone, and the sessions were not recorded. These interviews lasted about an hour, and our notes were transcribed immediately following the interview. Many of those interviewed had twenty or more years of advocacy or policymaking experience.

In addition to analyzing the comparative role of ethnic groups in the policymaking process, we explored the factors that help explain the influence of different ethnic lobbies. We focused on five main factors that may affect the power of ethnic lobbies: population, resources, assimilation, saliency, and goals. After collecting data from a number of sources, we conducted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis to determine which factors best help explain why some ethnic groups are more influential than others. Qualitative data were collected on each of the thirty-eight ethnic lobbies by examining their literature and websites, and by analyzing journalistic accounts.¹⁵

■ Outline of the Book

Chapter 2 examines the importance of ethnicity, race, and nationalism—phenomena that can have tremendous effects on the behavior of individuals. One of the effects of ethnicity is that it helps create communities of individuals, who may then form groups that attempt to influence the political process. The chapter analyzes the major ethnic groups and organizations that are engaged in the foreign policy-making process, including models of how ethnic groups are organized.

Chapter 3 focuses on the strategies and the tactics ethnic groups use to influence the policymaking process, including electioneering, direct lobbying, and grassroots lobbying. One of the charges leveled against interest groups involves their prowess in the electoral arena, specifically regarding campaign finance. Much has been made of PACs over the past several decades, and some scholars have concluded that “PACs are probably the primary source of cynicism and distrust of politics in the United States today” (Wright 2003, 115). PACs are federally regulated organizations that are formed to collect and distribute monetary and in-kind contributions to federal candidates. This chapter examines PAC contributions by ethnic interest groups from 1998 to 2006, in terms of both how much money is contributed by ethnic-based PACs and contribution patterns exhibited by ethnic PACs. We find, in general, that ethnic interest groups play a surprisingly small role in the PAC universe, accounting for about 1 percent of all PAC contributions. We also find that ethnic groups spend relatively little on direct lobbying.

Chapter 4 develops a theory for understanding the factors that contribute to the influence of ethnic groups. Five broad factors are examined, including the size and dispersion of their population, their resources (such as wealth and organizational assets), the saliency of foreign policy issues to the ethnic groups, their assimilation into US society, and the degree to which their goals are an attempt to alter the status quo.

Chapter 5 examines which ethnic groups are the most influential. The Jewish American and Cuban American lobbies are found to have the most

influence in foreign policy making, and seven others (the Irish American, Armenian American, Hispanic American, Taiwanese American, African American, Greek American, and Indian American lobbies) were judged to have a moderate degree of influence. This chapter also presents the multivariate analysis that examines what factors are most important for determining the influence of ethnic groups.

Chapter 6 presents the results of the survey and interviews of policymakers regarding the comparative influence of ethnic groups, which yielded many interesting findings. For example, we found little evidence that policymakers believe that ethnic interest groups, in general, have too much power. While most respondents cited examples of one or two lobbies having influence, respondents generally believed other actors have much greater influence than ethnic groups. Of the thirty-eight ethnic groups studied, only three ethnic lobbies were judged as having too much influence by a majority of policymakers: the Israeli (or Jewish American) lobby, the Cuban American lobby, and the Armenian American lobby.

Chapter 7 concludes the book, and we offer our final thoughts and analysis on the scope and influence of American ethnic groups.

■ Conclusion

We agree with Milton Esman that ethnic solidarity is a reality, as is the competition that exists between ethnic communities for political values and resources. In many political systems, ethnic communities vie for “relative political power, control over territory, access to and participation in the decision-making institutions of the state, or, alternatively, autonomy within the polity or complete separation. They include terms of access to education and employment . . . and the symbolic issues of recognition and respect for a community and its culture” (Esman 1994, 23). While ethnic communities within the United States do not contend for territory like, say, Nebraska, these ethnic communities do compete for *resources*, like foreign aid allocations, control over governmental programs (like Radio and TV Martí), immigration quotas, strategic and defense allocations, and trade policies. Increasingly, ethnic tensions surface in electoral races, with House, Senate, and gubernatorial contests serving as proxy battlegrounds for antagonistic ethno-racial groups and communities. In addition, ethnic politics affect party politics as well, as groups compete for relative political power within a party (a very real possibility for African Americans and Hispanic Americans within the Democratic Party), or tensions between groups threaten party cohesion (which has been the case between African Americans and Jewish Americans within the Democratic Party at times), or electoral considerations threaten

to cause or widen rifts within a party (such as efforts by some Republicans to appeal more to Hispanic Americans by easing immigration restrictions, which angers more nativist elements of the party). For all of these reasons, there is no doubt that ethnic politics are a reality. We hope that the analysis presented here can better determine the extent to which this reality may or may not be a normative concern for Americans.

■ Notes

1. Notable exceptions include Alexander DeConde's 1992 examination of the impact of ethnicity on US foreign policy and the historical roots of Anglo dominance on such policy, and Tony Smith's 2000 analysis of ethnic influence on foreign policy and the normative implications of such influence.

2. Intermestic policies are realms that link relations with other states to domestic economic concerns. Prominent examples include trade, immigration, and energy policies (Manning 1977; Barilleaux 1985).

3. It is important to note that consensus during this period did not "just happen," as "Cold War presidents worked diligently to achieve domestic legitimacy for their foreign policies" (Melanson 2005, 37).

4. Although not necessarily predicted by Madison, interested parties have a fourth access point as well: the courts. For at least half a century, interest groups have used the courts to initiate new policies, such as desegregation through *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

5. Herbert Hirsch (1995) notes that elites may manipulate historical memories for the purpose of mobilizing groups to commit genocide.

6. Patrons do not eliminate the need for members, since members are critical for grassroots mobilization. Further, if the organization can convince an individual to join the group and pay dues, the individual may feel more vested in the organization and participate at higher levels.

7. According to his letters, President Dwight D. Eisenhower gave "strict orders to the State Department that they should inform Israel that we would handle our affairs exactly as though we didn't have a Jew in America" (as quoted in DeConde 1992, 136).

8. A dozen years later, most Vietnamese Americans appeared to support efforts to permanently normalize trade relations between the United States and Vietnam, although some Vietnamese Americans and humanitarian groups opposed the efforts (Iritani 2006).

9. Obama was only the third African American elected to the US Senate since Reconstruction, while Martinez and Salazar were only the fourth and fifth Hispanic Americans in the Senate. At the time of their elections in 2004, there were no blacks or Hispanics serving in the Senate (Adelman 2000; Coile and Salladay 2000; Toner and Seelye 2004).

10. We interviewed respondents representing districts from every region of the United States, and the inclusion of committee staffers expanded the geographic representation of our research. In some cases, committee staffers began as personal staffers for the chairperson or ranking member of committee or subcommittee and moved later to committee staff. Many of these staffers remained associated with their district offices and retained ties to the district.

11. From the executive realm, we interviewed directors and deputy directors in six bureaus of the Department of State, one agency appointee, and a few desk officers. We also spoke with one high-ranking official in one other federal agency.

12. Nearly all of the interviews were done in person or by phone, and two respondents provided written answers instead of an interview.

13. There was no evidence that the sample was skewed to favor ethnic interest groups. While a few Capitol Hill respondents were cited by others as being champions of ethnic interest groups, other respondents hailed from districts that have no significant ethnic communities.

14. About half of respondents had some significant foreign policy-making experience prior to current work (such as a bureaucrat who worked previously for another agency, a staffer who had served in the executive branch, or a bureaucrat who had experience on Capitol Hill).

15. See Appendix A, questions 27–64, for a list of all thirty-eight ethnic groups studied.