

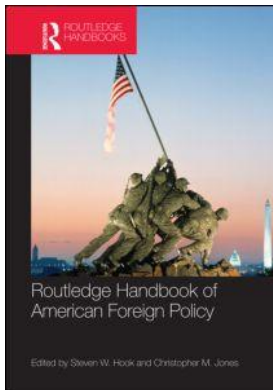
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Interest Groups

Patrick J. Haney

The role of interest groups in American foreign policy is an issue both of longstanding concern and renewed interest.¹ Work in this area runs the range of empirical studies through normative inquiries, and includes a variety of sometimes-insightful polemics as well. It is also a curiously frustrating field of study for a variety of reasons. Interest groups research by scholars of American politics tends to not turn attention on foreign policy cases; a review of the interest group literature in a previous “state of the discipline” volume, for example, made no meaningful reference to foreign policy issues (Cigler 1992). Conversely, research on U.S. foreign policy interest groups often is not as infused with an understanding of the dynamics of American politics as it should be. The discipline’s division between American politics and international relations, the subfield from which much of the analysis of foreign policy emerges, divides work that ought to be more closely linked.

Within the study of international relations, especially among realists during the Cold War, scholars often distinguished between “high politics” and “low politics.” High politics referred to issues of security and war; low politics was more of a catch-all category that included human rights and trade. Rarely did the twain meet. So too now, scholars of American foreign policy who focus on interest groups pursue a range of questions that often seem to contribute to separate literatures rather than one coherent, cumulating body of work. Studies of interest groups and foreign trade, for example, can seem a world away from work on ethnic interest groups. Policy types seem to still divide us even though the dynamics we study are common to our work. What do we know, in a scholarly sense, about lobbying that targets U.S. foreign policy? This chapter reviews and assesses developments in the study of interest groups in the American foreign policy process and tries to point to some questions left unanswered, and maybe unasked, by U.S. foreign policy analysts.

Evolution of Research

As the behavioral revolution extended to political science and international relations, there was scant attention to the role of organized interests in foreign policy. One of the main reasons for this was the presumption that, given the dominance of “high politics” in the Cold War, the president and his advisers controlled foreign policy making. Societal forces such as public opinion, interest groups, and the media, were mostly treated as environmental factors and not

proximate enough to power to influence policy. In their classic study of foreign trade policy, Bauer, Pool, and Dexter (1963) found that interest groups were relatively unimportant, a finding that may have discouraged scholarly attention to organized interests.

Even if this perspective was valid in the 1950s and early 1960s, it ceased to be true as the American political system was rocked by Watergate, the civil rights movement, and the Vietnam War. Congress became activated and more closely connected to public pressures than the White House. Societal forces became more powerful as the bipartisan foreign policy consensus shattered. Analysts of the policy process, including the foreign policy process, started to take notice: “The lines between foreign and domestic policy decisions have become blurred; domestic interest groups now take great interest in issues that once would have been considered purely in the foreign domain” (Ornstein 1977: 161–162). The “intermestic” nature of public policy brought social forces into what we used to think of as strictly “foreign” policy (Manning 1977; see also Brenner, Haney, and Vanderbush 2002).

Perhaps ironically, it was a review essay on Bauer and colleagues’ book, written by Theodore Lowi (1964; see also Hayes 1978), that started to point the way to how to conceptualize the role of interest groups in the foreign policy process. Lowi discussed distributive policy, redistributive policy, and regulatory policy as distinct arenas of power, within which different patterns of power and access likely emerge. If interest groups are more important in one domain than in another, foreign policy scholars started to have a more systematic way to think about how and, more importantly perhaps, when interest groups can make a difference in foreign policy (Milbrath 1967). Ripley and Franklin (1991), working from the American politics subfield, moved us even further when they make distinctions within what we call “foreign” policy: crisis policy, strategic policy, and structural defense policy. Interest groups are likely to have far more access to decision making on defense spending issues and basic foreign policy strategy than they have during foreign policy crises. That’s where to look. And yet, as Skidmore and Hudson (1993: 5) observed, foreign policy scholars still were not paying much attention to the role of interest groups even after the Cold War ended (see also Said 1981).

One literature that did try to cope with these dynamics during the Cold War was the vibrant, if sometimes polemical, literature on the “military industrial complex” and the significance of business interests in defense budgeting (see Melman 1970; Yarmolinsky 1971; Nathan and Oliver 1994: chapter 12). President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s 1961 farewell address included a second warning, about what he called the “scientific-technological elite” that he warned could come to dominate security policy making. But his first warning that coined the phrase “military-industrial complex” is the one that stuck. Following his warning that Americans must guard against the “acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought,” by this complex, a virtual industry of its own was born, trying to determine what Ike meant and whether it could be proved. If the complex referred to a large confluence of interests in society that share a self-interest in more defense spending, then “proving” it with social science models would be difficult. If it meant a smaller, more identifiable subgroup of elites that dominate policy, then that might point to defense spending dynamics and the role of defense contractors, the Pentagon, and Congress; the iron triangle (Adams 1981) could be seen as a slightly larger version of what C. Wright Mills (1956) called the “power elite.”

The military-industrial complex literature has waned significantly as models of congressional behavior became more sophisticated and often found little connection between the defense industry and a vote by a member of Congress. The fact that Congress treats defense spending as distributive politics, carving the budget up into small pieces that can be spread around the country so that defense spending is a “win-win” proposition also, it turns out, makes it tough to “prove” the presence of the complex in a social science sense. Reflecting on this literature,

LeLoup (2008: 41) recently commented, “But to be honest, for the vast majority of studies linking institutional position and voting behavior with the distribution of defense spending, the findings have generally been weak.” Some have continued to work in this area. Abdolali and Ward (1998), for example, constructed what they saw as a new measure of the presence of defense industries in congressional districts; they nevertheless found a minimal impact of defense spending in the state on Senators’ votes. The new polemic by Turse (2008) is another example of the continuing attention to this issue. LeLoup (2008: 41–42) captures well why it is many are still animated by this issue, noting that even though there is scant evidence to prove that defense spending is driven by defense contractors and greedy members of Congress, “do we not still have that lingering suspicion that weapons manufacturers, defense contractors like Haliburton, and powerful committee members, let alone vice presidents, still have something to do with the mess?”

Perhaps we should think of the scholarly attention to the rise of private military contractors as another instance of this question. There are other ways to conceptualize the role of these actors—an organized force that has an undeniable impact on American foreign policy. Scahill’s (2008) book about the Blackwater corporation (now Xe) and very strong social science research on the topic by Singer (2003), Avant (2005), and Stranger (2009) help explain what these groups are and what they do. Fitting them into our models of American foreign policy and conceptualizing them as hybrid actors (not quite a business interests but neither a classic interest group) is an important task for future research.

The literatures on American trade policy and foreign aid pay some attention to the role of interest groups. Lahiri and Raimondos-Møller (2000), for example, use a rational-choice model to try to show how ethnic group lobbying is related to foreign aid. A common assumption here is that ethnic groups in the United States lobby for aid to their homelands (or in Cuba’s case, lobby for an embargo against their homeland). It is perhaps ironic that just when ethnic interest groups seem to be more important in the foreign policy process, the U.S. strategy for foreign aid has come to be driven so much by security concerns and the war on terrorism, perhaps making ethnic lobbying a secondary concern. If control over, and access to, the foreign aid budget by interest groups has been slightly narrowed over time, it appears to have increased in the area of trade policy. The literature on the U.S. Congress has shown that there are strong incentives for the legislative branch to give substantial power over a range of decision making to the bureaucracy, while retaining some oversight capacity for themselves. There are also incentives to construct mechanisms whereby “clients” can also oversee the bureaucracy and “pull the fire alarm” if necessary, triggering congressional attention (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984).

Among other trade researchers, DeBièvre and Dür (2005) find that legislators delegate power to the foreign trade bureaucracy so that their clients can obtain better access to policy that promotes access to foreign markets or exporters and that promotes protectionism for domestic industries. Ehrlich (2008) explores the reverse situation—the extent to which Congress’s delegation of trade authority to the president has cut the access that industry groups used to enjoy, making it harder for protectionist forces to carry the day on trade policy. Drope and Hansen (2004: 35) study the way that campaign contributions and lobbying activities by business and industry interests have an impact on foreign trade policy as implemented by the U.S. International Trade Commission and the Commerce Department. As they concluded, “Systematic analysis of policy outcomes suggests that, even when controlling for economic hardship, the more money that firms and associations that favor protection spend and the more favorable the patterns of congressional representation, the more likely is it that they will enjoy an affirmative decision” (see also Fordham and McKeown 2003 and Drope and Hansen 2009).

The Impact of Ethnic Groups

By far the most active literature on interest groups in American foreign policy has been the study of ethnic interest groups (see Foyle and Van Belle 2010). One burst of scholarly activity regarding ethnic interest group activism in U.S. foreign policy emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. A more open governmental system, especially a more powerful and yet more porous Congress, gave real incentives for interest group activism in foreign policy—a large portion of which was driven by ethnic groups. Anthologies compiled by Said (1981) and Ahrari (1987) still stand as an important contribution to our understanding of ethnic lobbying during this period (see also Weil 1974; Garrett 1978; Watanabe 1984; Longmyer 1985; Richardson 1985; Sadd and Lendenmann 1985; and Stanfield 1989).

The end of the Cold War brought a new burst of ethnic lobbying on foreign policy, and a new wave of scholarly attention to these increasingly intermestic issues (DeConde, 1992; Brenner et al. 2002). Uslander (1995: 370–373) argues that the most prominent foreign policy lobby groups are ethnic interest groups, whose numbers and assertiveness vastly increased since the end of the Cold War. As Lindsay (2002: 37) notes, “in America, global politics is local politics—and local politics, often, is ethnic politics.” Studies of U.S. policy toward Latin America, for example, began regularly to examine the role of ethnic lobbying (see Arnson and Brenner 1993; Lowenthal 1993; Dent 1995; and De la Garza and Pachon 2000). And lobbying aimed at China policy (Bernstein and Munro 1998) and South Africa (Rogers 1993) received more scholarly scrutiny (see also Clough 1994; Dickson 1996; Vidal 1996; and Glasstris 1997). Extending the examination of ethnic group activism to congressional travel, Rosenson (2009) finds that the presence of ethnic groups in a congressional district has some effect on travel decisions by members.

The ethnic interest group literature has been especially focused on the activities of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Studies of this group commonly found AIPAC to be the most effective ethnic lobby on Capitol Hill (Cohen 1973; Franck and Weisband 1979; cf. Zogby and Stork 1987; Findley 1989; Goldberg 1990; Bard 1994; Nathan and Oliver 1994; Price 1996). The debate was renewed following highly publicized studies of the “Israel Lobby” by Mearsheimer and Walt (2006, 2007).

The field has also given significant attention to the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), often seen as the second most powerful ethnic interest group in America, at least in the 1980s and 1990s (see Fernandez 1987; Nichols 1988; Brenner 1988; Robbins 1992; Bardach 1994; Haney and Vanderbush 1999, 2005; Kiger 1997; Smith 1998; Kaplowitz 1998; Morley and McGillion 2002; Erikson 2008; and Schoultz 2009). Ambrosio (2002), in his edited volume, considers the normative implications of ethnic lobbying (see also Telhami 2002; Wilson 2004; and Marrar 2009).

Moving beyond a “group” approach to these issues and focusing on diaspora politics, Shain (1999: 8) focuses on “people with a common ethnic-religious origin who reside outside a claimed or an independent home territory” and who “regard themselves and/or are regarded by others as members or potential members of their country of origin.” This “diasporic” approach is distinct from other approaches that focus attention on an ethnic lobby organization.

There is a range of assumptions and propositions about the roles of ethnic interest groups in American foreign policy that emerge from the literature, but there remains little consensus on key question. Two empirical questions continue to preoccupy scholars in this field: How is the collective action problem solved, leading to the formation of groups? And why are some lobbies more powerful than others? It is to these questions we now turn our attention.

Ethnic Interest Group Formation

One of the issues commonly studied deals with the founding of ethnic interest groups. A traditional view sees interest groups as emerging in response to social or economic changes as groups of people with shared interests seek to petition the government (Truman 1951; Latham 1952). The argument that an increasingly porous American political system and multicultural society have facilitated the growth of ethnic interest groups can be commonly found (e.g., Clough 1994; Shain 1994–95: 812; Shain 1995), as is the idea that ethnicity serves as a “natural base for group formation and organized political action” (Goldberg 1990: 2–3). This view, however, fails to explain how collective action problems that surround group formation are overcome (Olson 1965). Olson’s research points to the importance of group leaders using selective benefits to break the collective action problem and get members to join a group. These leaders are then able to use the group’s power and resources to pursue the policy preferences they share with their members (Salisbury 1969). The founding of AIPAC would seem to fit in this position. Part of the idea to form a Jewish lobby group was to pressure Capitol Hill for legislation in support of Israel so as to counteract a perceived tilt toward the Arab states in the State Department (Kenen 1982: 66; Tivnan 1987: 34). Its formation was leadership driven. The example of CANF and its powerful and charismatic leader Jorge Mas Canosa fits this pattern as well (Haney and Vanderbush 1999, 2005).

There may be merit in both views. There are many types of groups that different people join for different reasons, though some groups (representing the interests of the well-off and business interests) are better represented than others (Moe 1980; Schlozman and Tierney 1986, ch. 4). Thus, membership maintenance patterns show a variety of patterns (Moe 1980; Walker 1983; Salisbury 1984). Smith (2000: 21) defines ethnicity as “a voluntary organization of people with a collective identity based on an intellectually formulated and emotionally felt assertion of their distinctiveness from other peoples.” Is such an identity meant to be taken as a given, or is it socially and politically constructed? To the extent that ethnic identity is a strategic choice that is subject to change (Hallmark 1981: 203), and that joining an organized group to pursue the interests of one’s identity is also one’s choice, then the formation and maintenance of ethnic interest groups continues to be a subject worthy of scrutiny (see Moore 2002).

Keys to Ethnic Group Success

A much broader literature exists on the question of the relative power of ethnic interest groups in U.S. foreign policy, and yet we still lack a common understanding of what makes some ethnic interest groups effective or powerful, why others seem to be relatively weak, and why the same group seems to vary in its power over time. There are plenty of propositions about ethnic interest group effectiveness, however (see Ambrosio 2002; Haney and Vanderbush 1999), and recent scholarship seems to be far more systematic about trying to measure and compare across groups using the same set of variables (e.g., Kirk 2008; Rubenzer 2008). One characteristic often pointed to as relevant is organizational strength, which refers to variables such as organizational unity, a professional lobbying apparatus that provides useful information, and financial resources. This factor is cited regularly by studies of AIPAC, for example, as a reason why it stands apart from other lobbies concerned with U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East (e.g., Bard, 1994; Price 1996). It appears that groups have tried to model themselves on AIPAC since it is seen as a benchmark of success (Banerjee 2007). Many other studies point to this factor as well (e.g., Hudson, Sims, and Thomas 1993: 61–63; Rogers 1993: 186; and Dickson 1996).

Other key set factors are membership unity, placement, and voter participation, in part because of the electoral implications of these variables (Tierney 1994; Dickson 1996). A vital power resource for a group is the extent to which it enjoys a large and unified base of politically active members who vote in a concentrated bloc. Saideman (2002) reminds us that even small groups can be politically powerful beyond what one might expect from their size. Smaller groups can be easier to organize and stay focused on an issue in ways that larger groups may not be able to, thus contributing to the power of small minority groups. There is also the suggestion that members need to be assimilated into American society but still retain a significant identification with the ethnic homeland (O'Grady 1996). Studies of AIPAC and CANF regularly cite this, but so too does Garrett's (1978), examination of the strength of Eastern European ethnic groups as a result of immigration increases in the 1970s.

Beyond these internal factors, many have argued that the salience and resonance of the message a group promotes is important because the government is not the only target of lobbying; the public is too as groups try to shape public opinion (Watanabe 1984). Many thus argue that ethnic interest groups will be more successful if their message is salient to the broader public (see Hudson et al. 1993: 61–63; Rogers 1993:186; Skidmore 1993: 229–231; Vidal 1996: 8–9). Lindsay (2002: 39) adds that a key factor in determining ethnic interest group strength is also whether the group is trying to preserve or overturn the status quo (preserving is found to be easier).

This research often finds ethnic groups most successful when their views support existing U.S. foreign policy objectives. In short, pushing on an open door is easier than trying to break into a locked vault. Fernandez (1987: 129) refers to this as “ideological congruence” (see also Arnson and Brenner 1993: 214; Dent 1995; Saideman 2002; and Haney and Vanderbush 2005). Short of this, groups are more successful if their opposition is weak and divided (Skidmore 1993: 229–231). Watanabe (1984: 60) argues that groups do better around “oppositionless” issues: those in which there is little disagreement about the policy goals even if there is significant debate over the means to pursue that goal

Another argument about the roots of ethnic interest group success focuses on access to the government. The proposition is that ethnic interest groups are more likely to be successful when the policy in question requires a congressional role since it is usually more porous than the executive. Skidmore (1993: 229–231) argues, for example, that interest groups are more likely to be influential when congressional involvement is necessary and presidential popularity is low. Similarly, Hudson et al. (1993: 61–63) argue that groups are more formidable to the extent they are proximate to the locus of decision-making. The Mearsheimer and Walt (2007) analysis of the “Israel Lobby” is replete with examples of this.

A final, and I would argue often overlooked, point is the proposition that for ethnic interest groups to be successful they should establish mutually supportive relationships between themselves and policy makers, to establish what Watanabe (1984: chapter 3) calls “symbiotic relationships.” A common presumption of this research is that while groups need policy makers to do something for them, policy makers also need the ethnic interest groups to provide valuable resources to policy makers, including information, votes, and campaign contributions (Haney and Vanderbush 2005). Political leaders may actively court ethnic groups, which was clearly the case with CANF in the 1980s (Haney and Vanderbush 1999). In this context, the growing impact of groups favoring a “two-state” solution in the Middle East may be attributable to the openness of the Obama administration to the group and its message.

There is, in short, some emerging consensus in the literature about what makes some ethnic lobbies strong and others weak, but far less agreement about how these items add up to influence. There is even less agreement about how to actually measure the relative strength of ethnic interest groups, and even less attention to how to compare the strength of ethnic lobbies to other types of organized interests, such as business interests. The lack of consensus about

the dynamics behind the formation and power of ethnic lobby groups to some extent emerges from an unclear evidentiary pattern and an understudied set of phenomena.

Enduring Debates: Policy Capture?

The debates that exist over the normative implications of lobbying, particularly ethnic lobbying, in foreign policy can be quite heated. Do “special interests” warp the policy process, killing any idea of the “national interest” and replacing it with narrow interests that are actually counterproductive for the country? Do ethnic interest groups focus narrowly on their particularized interest and on the interests of their kin abroad rather than on the national interest? Have they captured policy in ways that are counterproductive both for policy and for democracy? Or is ethnic lobbying normal and healthy for democracy?

Pessimists about the impact of interest groups in the American foreign policy process, especially ethnic groups, include Mearsheimer and Walt (2007: 11), who examined “the loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction.” They do not argue that every Jewish group or all Jewish-Americans are part of this lobby, and they reject the idea that the lobby “is a single, unified movement with a central leadership” (Mearsheimer and Walt 2007: 5). Nonetheless, they argue that the “Israel Lobby” has captured U.S. foreign policy toward Israel and the Middle East, which they see as detrimental to U.S. interests and American democracy.

Zbigniew Brzezinski (2006: 64), a former national security adviser, finds that this problem is likely to worsen due to “the increased inclination of the U.S. Congress to become engaged in legislating foreign policy. With members of Congress involved in continuous electoral fundraising, the effect has been an increase in the influence of lobbies and, particularly, those that take part in targeted political fundraising. It is probably not an accident that the most effective lobbies are also the ones that have been the most endowed. Whether that produces the best definition of the American national interest in the Middle East or elsewhere is open to question, and worthy of serious debate” (see Brzezinski 2010 for a more recent analysis).

Not everyone is so pessimistic. Durant and Diehl (1989: 186–187) argue that interest groups generally hold little sway in the agenda-setting process of making foreign policy. To Moore (2002: 90), “while the Jewish-American minority has certainly created a strong lobby in Washington, public opinion has historically supported U.S. policy toward Israel. Since majority opinion has not been at odds with national policy, this is not an example of what I call policy capture. If majority public opinion breaks with policies advocated by the pro-Israeli lobby in the United States but U.S. policy does not change, then we can speak of foreign policy capture by an ethnic minority.” For his part, Lindsay (2002) argues that the willingness to engage in struggles over foreign policy, and their ability to get their way, is exaggerated, noting that the Jewish-American lobby is an exceptional case (see Schier 2002). Finally, Shain (1999: 52) is perhaps the most optimistic about the role of identity groups in the foreign policy process, arguing that such groups are good for democracy because “they must justify their actions in terms of American national interests and values.”

Future Directions for Research

At the end of the day it is hard to know which side in these debates is more correct. First, these positions often seem to be informed more by one’s philosophical starting point than by the evidence. Shain is a believer in pluralism; Smith seems more skeptical about Madison’s solution to the problem of factions standing up to these new ethnic forces; Mearsheimer and Walt

are realists trying to explain why a state's policy does not match the expectations of rational choice. So where one stands on the issue of special interests in foreign policy is likely driven to a large extent by where one sits on broader philosophical issues that shape and inform how we assess evidence. Another persistent problem is that comparing studies of interest groups in Americans foreign policy is often like comparing apples to hockey pucks; scholars commonly examine different aspects of this phenomenon so their findings are difficult to compare.

In this respect, studies in the future should aim to be comparative, replicable, and cumulative. One example of such research is Rubenzer's (2008) comparative study of ethnic interest groups, in which he uses qualitative comparative analysis to try to find patterns of what makes these groups successful. His meta-study finds that only organizational strength and political activity seem to be necessary conditions for success, and no factors seem to be sufficient conditions for success. More work along these lines is badly needed.

One area of ethnic lobbying research where there ought to be more comparability is in the more narrow focus of how groups use campaign contributions as part of their lobbying effort, and to what effect. The problem with "contributions" studies is in laying out the causal chain, proving that a campaign contribution led to a vote that otherwise would not have been cast. There is, though, some interesting evidence about ethnic lobbying "leading" votes, rather than just rewarding them. Swanson (2007) and Clark (2009) find evidence that campaign contributions targeted to new members of Congress (the most vulnerable and the ones with little track record) have paid off for the U.S.-Cuba Democracy initiative. To steal a line from Watergate, we need to "follow the money" and try to flesh out the causal linkages.

Our conception of group competition also deserves more attention. We tend to think that as one group "wins" the policy game, another "loses," but we rarely unpack this assumption. Przeworski and Sprague (1986) show how outcomes are more complicated than they might at first appear even in an electoral context. Is it the case that ethnic lobbies always *directly* confront one another in a zero-sum environment? When an interest group does not win policy, does it by definition lose? Can interest groups be so single-minded as to have only one objective and only one mode of activity? Just as a battlefield is not always composed of two armies facing off against one another, perhaps other forms of competition should be considered, and the battlefield metaphor jettisoned.

Studying interest groups and ethnic lobbies in foreign policy not as independent variables but as dependent variables deserves more scrutiny. Schattschneider (1960) found that a common tactic of political actors who are about to lose is to expand the scope of conflict, which here means that leaders may reach out to ethnic groups to help them win debates, much like the Reagan administration did with CANF (Haney and Vanderbush 1999; see also Haddad 1991). The Obama administration clearly had an initial strategy to reach out to societal groups in order to further its foreign policy goals (Slaughter 2009). We need more studies of how the government targets interest groups, ethnic and otherwise, and how these groups and their strategies are affected by events.

Our studies also should take into account new lobbying hybrids that are increasingly active in U.S. foreign policy. The idea that lobbying is an activity restricted to groups that are formally organized, if it was ever true, is out of date. We must now also account for the lobbying efforts of a range of private contractors, think tanks, law firms that represent interests, public relations firms, and combinations thereof. The June 2009 coup in Honduras that ousted President Manuel Zelaya from power is one such example. The Obama administration found its policy under attack when several Honduran business groups hired Washington lobbyists and public relations firms to help make sure the U.S. government did not force Zelaya's return to power (Thompson and Nixon 2009). Lobbyists and firms with ties to both parties exerted strong pressure on the Obama administration to accept a new government in Honduras. Our

typical conception of interest group activity in foreign policy must be ready to take these more complex dynamics into account.

The study of interest groups in American foreign policy has a storied past, with many great classics in the field informing current research. Yet one cannot help but be frustrated on at least three fronts. First, it is a field with few firm, generalizable conclusions. Do ethnic interest groups capture policy? What makes one group strong and another weak? Why does a “strong” group win one day and lose the next? There is little cumulation in the field, as those who study foreign policy interest groups rarely draw upon the work being done on the domestic side of the field (and vice-versa), and as scholars of ethnic interest groups, business interests, and the lobbying of other groups have sorted into separate camps.

Second, it is not clear that our theoretical understanding or our empirical studies are keeping up with the real-world phenomena that we study. A more singular focus on organized groups might help the cumulation problem, but social and diasporic forces are also “bigger” than such institutionalized groups. Some actors are in a sense “smaller” than what we normally think of as interest groups, though their leverage over policy making appears to be growing. The lines between a think tank, a lobby firm that does contract work for the government, and an advocacy group are quickly becoming blurry. If analysts of U.S. foreign policy are going to stay relevant to the understanding of policy making today and in the future, our models need to better incorporate the role of these actors and forces into our understanding of “interest groups.”

Finally, there is general recognition that the structure of government institutions helps shape the environment in which interest groups operate. The decentralization of power in Congress and the expanded size and scope of the federal bureaucracy, for example, have heightened the engagement of interest groups in foreign policy issues. But few studies have followed this line of thinking forward to how else the government influences interest groups, rather than the other way around. As Salisbury (1990: 213) concluded more than two decades ago, “where interest groups were seen as the prime motive force pressing politicians to make policy decisions in their favor, now the officials very often exploit the groups.” How officials try to exploit these groups to their foreign policy advantage remains one of many subjects ripe for future research.

Note

- 1 In this chapter I draw heavily from my essay on ethnic lobbying that was published in the *International Studies Encyclopedia* (Haney 2010) and from papers presented at the 2008 and 2010 annual meetings of the International Studies Association. I would like to thank Ralph Carter, Douglas Foyle, Steven Hook, Patrick James, Christopher Jones, Jeff Pickering, Steven Redd, James Scott, and Douglas Van Belle.

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