Divided or Together?
Conflict and Cooperation between African Americans and Latinos

KENNETH J. MEIER, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
PAULA D. MCCLAIN, DUKE UNIVERSITY
J. L. POLINARD AND ROBERT D. WRINKLE, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN

This article examines the political relationships between Latinos and African Americans in 194 multiracial school districts. The empirical results indicate that at times the relationship between Latinos and African Americans is competitive and at times it is complimentary. When scarcity is a factor, such as in administrative and teaching positions, gains by one group often result in losses by another. When the focus changes to policy questions where scarcity is not a factor (e.g., student performance), both groups gain at the same time.

Power and its exercise are the lifeblood of the political process. The struggle for resources and favorable policies among racial and ethnic groups has been a defining characteristic of American politics (Hero 1998; Carmines and Stimson 1989). Because politics is often perceived as a zero-sum game, one group's benefits may come at the expense of another's. Much of the analysis of American politics has focused on this phenomenon.

Multiracial/multiethnic political relationships have grown in importance as the American community has become more diverse. The 2000 census found that American society was 7.5 percent more minority than in 1990. African Americans now comprise 12.3 percent of the American population, Hispanics 12.5 percent, and Asians 3.6 percent. The Hispanic percentage in particular represents a significant growth over its 1990 share of the populace, growing from just under 9 percent to its current level.

Even prior to the recent growth in minority populations, the issue of how minority groups relate to one another and to the majority population has been a subject of considerable inquiry by political scientists (McClain and Karnig 1990; McClain 1993; McClain and Tauber 1998, 2001; Sonenshein 1993; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Meier and Stewart 1991). In an increasingly multiracial/multiethnic society, the question of racial and/or ethnic cooperation is an important aspect of the larger American political process. Whether minority groups cooperate or clash has important ramifications for the outcome of many policy processes.

This article extends previous intra-minority group research (see McClain and Karnig 1990; McClain 1993; McClain and Tauber 1998, 2001; Sonenshein 1993) in two ways. First, we explicitly incorporate the representation process and show how that process affects actual policy outcomes—the “who gets what, when, and how” question. Second, the analysis uses highly appropriate methods to sort out the influence between ethnic groups rather than relying on pure cross-sectional techniques.

Conflict or Cooperation

The nature of relationships between minority and majority ethnic/racial communities has been defined by a number of authors (see, for example, Belanger and Pinard (1991) and Morrison (1987)). The most common definition is in the context of finite goods—in effect a zero-sum game, where the benefits of one group must of necessity be taken from another. The zero-sum situation, however, is not the sole possibility. Minority-minority relationships may also extend to a positive-sum game, where resources and/or policy outcomes are not finite. McClain (1993) hypothesizes three scenarios for minority-minority relationships. First, minorities conclude that they share common interests and therefore attempt to cooperate and reap benefits from joint political action. Such cooperation may or may not be at the expense of other groups, such as Anglos. For example, emphasis on economic development opportunities that improve job prospects for all citizens could expand the overall size of the economic pie. Second, the groups conclude that their interests are independent of each other, i.e., the actions and outcomes of one group have no impact on or relationship to the other. Such relationships are possible in an ideal pluralist world where actions in one policy sphere do not affect actions in another. For example, more emphasis on bilingual education for Latinos might be achieved without taking benefits from African-American students. Third, the groups conclude that they are in conflict with one another—the zero-sum scenario, where one group benefits at the expense of the other group. For example, Latino groups might seek the appointment of a Latino school superintendent, an action that, by definition prevents the appointment of an African-American superintendent.

Each scenario is dependent upon a number of factors, including the relative size and resource strength of the two minority groups, as well as their relationship to the dominant
group in the society. If one assumes that the dominant economic (and likely political) group is Anglos and that groups in power desire to stay in power, then the question is whether or not Latinos and African Americans will work together to counter the Anglo biases in the present system. The logic of a Latino-Black coalition is that both minority groups are likely to perceive they are discriminated against in the political system and thus likely to form a coalition to attempt to gain control over government or a fair share of policy benefits (see Portes 1984; de la Garza et al. 1992; DeSipio 1996; Sigelman and Welch 1991).

Previous research suggests that all three scenarios are possible. Research has found cooperation among minority groups in a “rainbow coalition” approach (Henry 1980; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984, 1990; McClain and Karnig 1990; Sonenshein 1990, 1993; Muñoz and Henry 1990; Henry and Muñoz 1991; Saito 1993; Stewart 1993; Regalado 1994). Intra-minority coalitions have been formed around issues as diverse as immigration (Espiritu 1992), civil rights, and poverty (Estrada, Garcia, and Marcias 1981) among others. The “independence” scenario has been supported in some research and some specific policy domains (on voting see Morris 2000). McClain and Tauber (1998: 240) found no significant relationship between African Americans and Latinos on educational policy outcomes. While minorities may face competition with Anglos, McClain and Tauber (242) found “neither widespread direct political competition nor mutual support between Blacks and Latinos.” In other words, Black and Latino education levels were essentially unrelated to each other. These findings contrast with Meier and Stewart’s (1991) assessment of education; they found that education policies such as grouping and tracking generated trade-offs between Latino and African-American students. Increases in the number of Black students in special education classes, gifted classes or in disciplinary actions were associated with declines in similar outcomes for Latino students. Meier and Stewart argued that these relationships reflected intragroup conflict but did not determine whether that conflict was inherent between the two groups or was mediated by the dominant Anglo group.

Finally, while status similarities can form the base for coalition building, they may also contribute to competition between groups (McClain 1993). A host of research suggests that inter-minority tensions have undercut the potential for coalition building (Cohen 1982; Dyer, Vedlitz, and Worcelh 1989; Freer 1994; Bobo et al. 1994.). Tedin and Murray (1994), illustrating the potential for competition, found that politically attentive (registered and efficacious) African Americans and Latinos are less supportive of coalitions among minorities than are other African Americans and Latinos. Dyer, Vedlitz, and Worcelh (1989) also found that both African Americans and Latinos felt closer to Anglos than to the other minority. Significant political schisms between the minority groups have developed over recent political events. These include the conflict over “English Only” referenda and the recent municipal elections in Los Angeles (1997 and 2001), Houston (2001 and 2003), and Miami (2000).

**Educational Policy and Minority Relations**

Education policies and school districts are ideal for examining questions of inter-racial/ethnic competition or cooperation. First, education is a crucial policy area, one that affects a multitude of other policy arenas. Education is touted as the key to upward-mobility; it translates directly into differences in income and employment, and indirectly into differences in access to housing, recreation, and future political influence (Smith 2003; Jencks and Phillips 1998). Second, public education also accounts for a significant portion of public expenditures. School systems are the nation’s largest public employer and provide numerous jobs that are highly prized in minority communities (Rich 1996). These jobs can create the basis for a vibrant minority middle class. Third, education as an issue has always been high on the civil rights agenda of both Blacks and Latinos. Blacks, frequently through the NAACP, fought a long struggle seeking equal access to public education; Latinos followed a similar process but over a shorter period of time (see Meier, Stewart, and England 1989; Meier and Stewart 1991 and works cited therein). Fourth, relationships in this policy area are in doubt. McClain and Karnig (1990), McClain (1993) and McClain and Tauber (1998) examined education policy outcomes and found mixed results, either independent relationships or cooperative relationships. In contrast, Meier and Stewart (1991), looking at ability grouping and tracking rather than overall levels of educational attainment, revealed essentially conflictual relationships whereby the gains of one group were offset by the losses of the other. Finally, education is also a policy area that previous research has singled out as having experienced a change in the nature of minority-minority relationships (McClain and Tauber 1998).

The literature, therefore, has found support for three hypotheses. Our objective is empirical, to determine which of these three hypotheses hold in contemporary education policy.

- $H_1$: Representational and policy gains by Blacks will be negatively associated with representation and policy gains by Latinos, and vice versa.
- $H_2$: Representational and policy gains by Blacks will be positively associated with representation and policy gains by Latinos, and vice versa.
- $H_3$: Representational and policy gains by Blacks will be unrelated to representation and policy gains by Latinos.

**Data and Methods**

The data for this study come from school districts in Texas from 1997 to 1999. Texas is an excellent site because it has numerous school districts with large enrollments of both African-American and Latino students. Only California
African-American teachers might affect the ability of a district to hire more Latino teachers. This is especially true, hiring more Latino teachers could limit the opportunities to hire more African-American teachers. This reciprocal causation means that ordinary least squares regression (OLS) is an inappropriate method of analysis because OLS could not distinguish between the influence of African-Americans and Latinos. As an illustration, an increase in African-American teachers might affect the ability of a district to hire more Latino teachers simply because every district only has a limited number of teaching positions. Similarly, hiring more Latino teachers could limit the opportunities to hire more African-American teachers. This reciprocal causation means that ordinary least squares regression (OLS) is an inappropriate method of analysis because OLS could not distinguish between the influence of African-Americans and Latinos. The appropriate technique, therefore, is two stage least squares regression that addresses the reciprocal causation via a set of exogenous instrumental variables that are assumed to influence levels of collinearity problems and found that levels of collinearity were all within normal bounds. The multi-year nature of the data set means we must be concerned with problems of serial correlation and heteroscedasticity. To control for serial correlation, a set of dummy variables representing individual years is included in all models. Examining the residuals for each year showed little heteroscedasticity so no such corrections were used. We also checked each regression for collinearity problems and found that levels of collinearity were all within normal bounds.

The theoretical question we address involves tradeoffs between minority groups. In a competitive situation, gains by African-Americans would be associated with losses by Latinos and vice versa. As an illustration, an increase in African-American teachers might affect the ability of a district to hire more Latino teachers simply because every district only has a limited number of teaching positions. Similarly, hiring more Latino teachers could limit the opportunities to hire more African-American teachers. This reciprocal causation means that ordinary least squares regression (OLS) is an inappropriate method of analysis because OLS could not distinguish between the influence of African-Americans and Latinos. The appropriate technique, therefore, is two stage least squares regression that addresses the reciprocal causation via a set of exogenous instrumental variables that are assumed to influence one but not both endogenous variables (Pindyck and Rubinfeld 1991). The instrumental variables are used in the first stage regressions to predict each of the dependent variables. These predicted variables, termed “purged” variables, are then used in place of the endogenous variables when they are treated as independent variables.

**DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

To determine any possible tradeoffs between African-Americans and Latinos, we examine three dependent variables: the percentage African-American (Latino) administrators in the district, the percentage African-American (Latino) teachers in the district, and the pass rate on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exam by both African-American and Latino students. We examine the variables in a sequential process. After probing for tradeoffs among administrative positions, we then move to teachers (using administrators as an independent variable, see below) and then to TAAS test scores. TAAS is a skills-based standardized test that all students in Texas must take in several grades. At the time of this study, the exam was given in grades 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10. It is a high stakes test, and students must pass the exit exam (the 10th grade exam) to receive a regular high school diploma. We use the pass rate for all grades in the analysis; that is, the dependent variable is the percentage of African Americans (Latinos) who pass the exam (number passing divided by number taking). The TAAS exam is the best single indicator to use for education performance because it is the center piece of the state education accountability system. Test results are highly salient, and school performance on the test is taken as a key indicator of overall performance. In terms of the range of educational objectives, TAAS is incomplete because it does not deal with the higher end skills of students, does not take into account provisions for vocational training, and cannot incorporate the rich tapestry of the educational process. Politically, however, it is without question the most important single indicator of school performance; a survey of superintendents in Texas revealed that 75 percent rank TAAS performance as their first priority (Meier and O’Toole 2003).

We have explicitly opted to use percentages for both access to positions and policy outcomes rather than ratios comparing how well Blacks and Latinos perform in relation to their population numbers. First, influence in public policy is likely to be affected by raw numbers or percentages rather than on whether or not proportionality is achieved. An African-American population of 30 percent with 20 percent representation on the school board is likely to be better represented than a African-American population of 5 percent regardless of the proportionality of the distribution. Third, ratios are often distorted when the minority population is small, and an upper limit exists on ratios when the minority population is large. These numeric restrictions create limits on the variation in artificial terms rather than the real limits of percentages (0 and 100 percent).

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

*Representation*

Decisions and tradeoffs pass through a political process whereby representatives act to protect the interests of their
constituents. Accordingly, measures of representation will be included in each model. For the administrators' model, our political representation variable is the percentage of the ethnic group membership on the school board. Substantial research identifies the importance of having racial and/or ethnic membership on the school board when trying to influence the education policy process (see Fraga, Meier, and England 1986; Polinard et al. 1994; Polinard, Wrinkle, and Longoria, 1990).

When the dependent variable shifts to teachers, representation will be measured at the school administrator level. When the focus is test scores, bureaucratic representation will be measured by the ethnic composition of the teaching faculty (Lipsky 1980). Research suggests that minority administrators lead to more minority teachers (Meier and Stewart 1991). The number of minority teachers then directly affects the education of minority students (Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999). The education literature suggests four ways minority teachers can do this. First, minority teachers are more effective at teaching minority students (Moore and Johnson 1983: 472; Aaron and Powell 198: 55). Second, minority teachers serve as role models for minority students (Cole 1986: 332). Third, minority teachers mitigate the negative consequences of grouping, tracking, and discipline either by decisions or by influencing overall policy (Meier and Stewart 1991). Fourth, minority teachers might influence the behavior of majority teachers who in turn rely on teaching methods less likely to disadvantage minority students. Only the first of these methods requires a given minority student to come into contact with a specific minority teacher. The others can work indirectly so that the appropriate unit of analysis is at the organizational level rather than the individual level.

Controls

We also include a variety of other factors that influence education performance in the model. These are the usual suspects culled from the education literature and are frequently used in education production functions. Production functions typically include measures of environmental constraints, resources applied to the process, and district policies designed to improve performance.

In the context of educational policy, poverty is a serious constraint on student performance. Poverty not only means students lack access to learning tools in the home—computers, educational toys, etc.—but is also correlated with a less stable and less supportive home environment, e.g., single parent households, high rates of teen pregnancy, and low educational expectations (Necochea and Cune 1996; Fuller et al. 1996). While the components of poverty that contribute directly to lower educational performance are less well defined, research consistently shows that poverty is negatively linked to education performance (Jencks and Phillips 1998). Our measure of student poverty is the percent of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals in the school lunch program. Because this measure includes all students not just Latino or Black students, we also included two measures from the U.S. Census—the percentage of Black/Latino families living in poverty and the percentage of Blacks/Latinos over age 25 who have graduated from high school. We expect the relationships to performance to be negative for the school lunch and poverty measure and positive for the education measure.

The relationship between expenditures and educational outcomes is one of the most contested relationships in educational policy. Examining a wealth of studies, Hanushek (1986, 1989, 1996) contends that there is no consistent relationship between money and student outcomes. Although this finding has been challenged (Hedges and Greenwald 1996), it remains the conventional wisdom. In recent longitudinal studies, however, Murray (1995), Evans, Murray, and Schwab (1997), and Murray, Evans, and Schwab (1995) found that districts that increased expenditures experienced improved performance.

We include three "expenditure" variables in the analysis: per pupil expenditures for instruction, average teacher salary, and percentage of money from state funds. Per pupil expenditures for instruction are used in preference to total per pupil spending because many Texas districts spend lavishly on extracurricular activities. Our concern is academic performance, so the spending measure is based on classroom instruction. Education is personnel intensive, and most spending pays salaries of teachers and other staff. Higher salaries are perceived in economic theory as a way to attract better qualified persons to the profession (Hanushek and Pace 1995). Finally, state aid can be used to compensate for inequities in local tax bases. Although Texas is not known for redistributive educational policies and has a long history of litigation on this issue (e.g., San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez 1973; Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby 1987), greater funds from state governments can compensate for a meager local tax base. All relationships should be positive.

Education policies are intended to influence student performance. One such policy involves the learning environment—class size. Although many studies indicate that only major changes in class size are effective, schools with

---

3 How much of educational funds to spend on instruction versus other matters is clearly a policy decision. We investigated whether this policy decision affected the relationships found in this study, and they did not. The percentage of total educational funds spent on instruction was essentially incorporated via other measures such as teacher salaries and class size. Whatever the reason that school districts allocate funds away from instruction to other factors, race and ethnicity were not part of the process.

4 The relationship for state aid is puzzling on one dimension since funds spent on education should be equally valuable regardless of the source of funds. State funds, however, are not subject to local political pressures to keep the tax rate low, and the relatively recent rise in state funds means they can be targeted to new programs. These funds, as a result, might give local educational leaders more freedom to spend the funds on programs that aid minority students. The fact remains that state funds are more positively correlated with minority student outcomes than are local funds.
smaller class sizes should have an advantage at the margin (see Pate-Bain et al.1992; Nye et al.1992; Hedges and Greenwald 1996; Hanushek 1996: 54). Our measure is the number of students per teacher in the district. Class size should be negatively related to student performance.

Teachers are a crucial element in a student’s educational environment. In a profession based on life-long learning, experienced teachers should prove to be an advantage, especially in multiracial districts. Our measure is the average years of teacher experience, which should be positively related to student performance.

Finally, the test score model controls for the overall quality of the schools so that any results are not a function of African Americans or Latinos attending generally better or worse schools. Measuring the quality of schools is not an easy task. Weiher (2000) argues that better schools will benefit students of all races and proposes that the performance of nonminority students is a good surrogate for school quality. In addition to serving as a proxy for school quality, our measure, the percentage of Anglo students passing the TAAS, could also tap into peer effects. Students generally perform at higher levels when they are placed in environments with children who are already high performers (Jencks and Phillips 1998).

**FINDINGS**

Table 1 presents descriptive information for key variables. African Americans have a greater presence on the school board and among teachers and administrators in the districts in our sample. Latinos, however, have a larger share of the student body in our selected schools, as well as slightly higher test scores.

Table 2 presents the two stage least squares estimates for the determinants of Latino administrators (the instruments are listed at the bottom of the table). Because our concern is tradeoffs rather than the relationships between the control variables and the political measures, we do not discuss the relationships for the control variables. If competition between minority groups is present, we expect a negative relationship between percent African-American administrators and percent Latino administrators. Clearly this is the case, even when controlling for a number of additional variables. More African-American administrators are associated with fewer Latino administrators.

Table 3 presents the determinants of African-American administrators. Essentially the same pattern of relationships is
Table 3

DETERMINANTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADMINISTRATORS TWO STAGE LEAST SQUARES ESTIMATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>T-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino Administrators</td>
<td>-2.508</td>
<td>.0679</td>
<td>3.69*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Board %</td>
<td>.4526</td>
<td>.0407</td>
<td>11.12*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Students</td>
<td>.4822</td>
<td>.0444</td>
<td>10.85*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Salary (k)</td>
<td>.4072</td>
<td>.4446</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>2.3349</td>
<td>.5550</td>
<td>4.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Experience</td>
<td>-.0689</td>
<td>.3983</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Aid</td>
<td>-.1224</td>
<td>.0312</td>
<td>3.93*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Funding (k)</td>
<td>-.4806</td>
<td>2.537</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Poverty</td>
<td>-.1455</td>
<td>.0450</td>
<td>3.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Education</td>
<td>.1998</td>
<td>.0609</td>
<td>3.28*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-Square</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-Square</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>33.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Note: Coefficients for individual years not reported.

Instruments for Latino Administrators = Low income, teacher salary, class size, teacher experience, state aid, instructional funds, Latino education, Latino poverty, and Latino administrators (t-1).

found. Controlling for other variables, Latino administrators are negatively associated with the percentage of African-American administrators. The relationship suggests that competition rather than cooperation is the norm. The coefficient for Latino administrators is almost three times as large in Table 3 as the coefficient for African-American administrators in Table 2. Why might Latino administrators have a more negative impact on African-American administrators than vice versa? Such findings, we speculate, are consistent with the Meier and Stewart's (1991) power thesis argument that Anglos are more likely to agree to benefits targeted at Latinos than those targeted at African Americans. In multiracial school districts, support from Anglos may be necessary to gain policy benefits. If this support is on the side of Latinos, then the coalition could work to limit the negative impact on Latinos when African-American administrators are hired.

Politics also matters in hiring administrators. The strong positive relationships for school board representation in both tables further underscore the political nature of achieving bureaucratic representation. African-American school board members are positively associated with more African-American administrators, and Latino board members are similarly associated with more Latino administrators.

An important question is whether the role that elected officials play in this process is direct or indirect. If a Latino school board member merely advocates the hiring of Latino administrators without opposing the hiring of African-American administrators, then one would expect that including Latino school board members in the African-American administrators' equation would result in an insignificant relationship. If the competitive nature of the relationship escalated to general opposition to African-American administrators by Latino board members, then a significant and negative relationship would be expected. To determine if these relationships have direct as well as indirect aspects, we added African-American school board members to the Latino administrators equation and Latino school board members to the African-American administrators equation. Table 4 reports just the key coefficients for administrators and the endogenous variables. The results show both direct and indirect effects. That is, the impact of

Table 4

THE DIRECT INFLUENCE ON SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ON OTHER RACE ADMINISTRATORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>African American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino Board Members</td>
<td>.385</td>
<td>-.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11.87)*</td>
<td>(3.63)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Board Members</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2.87)*</td>
<td>(11.46)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Administrators</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Administrators</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.82)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Note: Equations include all variables in Tables 2 and 3 and estimated via two stage least squares.
We also then included the percentage of Latino administrators in the African-American teachers equation and the percentage of African-American administrators in the Latino teachers equation. Unlike the relationship for school board members and administrators, in this case neither set of administrators had any direct impact on teachers of the other ethnicity (results not shown). Unlike the relationships in Table 4, therefore, the linkage between administrators and teachers was only through influence on hiring teachers of the same ethnicity as the administrators.

Turning to actual policy outcomes (student performance) presents a different picture. Table 7 presents the determinants of Latino test scores. Here minority-minority student performance is complementary. The coefficient for the African-American pass rate, controlling for other factors including the Anglo pass rate, is significant and positive. The higher the African-American (and Anglo) pass rate, the higher the Latino pass rate. The coefficient is large (.44) and strongly significant (t = 12.99). Table 8 presents the same pattern with respect to the determinants of African-American test scores. Here the Latino pass rate is complementary (positive .64) and strongly significant. Adding African-American teachers to the Latino test equation and adding Latino teachers to the African-American test equation did not produce any significant direct effects for these teachers.

The differences between administrators and teachers on the one hand, where there is competition between the groups, and the student performance variables, where no competition is found, is suggestive. Each district has a limited number of administrators and teachers. Scarcity, thus, induces competition. Actual student achievement, however,
Table 6
DETERMINANTS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN TEACHERS, TWO STAGE LEAST SQUARES ESTIMATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>T-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino Teachers</td>
<td>-.2037</td>
<td>.0408</td>
<td>4.99*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Admin</td>
<td>.5630</td>
<td>.0183</td>
<td>30.75*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Students</td>
<td>.1343</td>
<td>.0230</td>
<td>5.84*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Salary (k)</td>
<td>-.0079</td>
<td>.2121</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>1.0299</td>
<td>.2647</td>
<td>3.89*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Experience</td>
<td>.4586</td>
<td>.1835</td>
<td>2.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Aid</td>
<td>.0325</td>
<td>.0148</td>
<td>2.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Funding (k)</td>
<td>2.1041</td>
<td>1.2100</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Poverty</td>
<td>.0052</td>
<td>.0217</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American Education</td>
<td>.0655</td>
<td>.0291</td>
<td>2.25*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square: .75
Adjusted R-Square: .75
F: 143.25
N: 582

*p < .05

Note: Coefficients for individual years not reported.

Instruments for Latino Teachers = Low income, teacher salary, class size, teacher experience, state aid, instructional funds, Latino education, Latino poverty, Latino administrators, and Latino teachers (t-1).

Table 7
DETERMINANTS OF LATINO TEST SCORES, TWO STAGE LEAST SQUARES ESTIMATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Slope</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>T-score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American Pass Rate</td>
<td>.4408</td>
<td>.0339</td>
<td>12.99*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Teachers</td>
<td>.0275</td>
<td>.0535</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo Pass Rate</td>
<td>.5761</td>
<td>.0512</td>
<td>11.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Students</td>
<td>-.0978</td>
<td>.0266</td>
<td>3.68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Students</td>
<td>.0392</td>
<td>.0234</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Salary (k)</td>
<td>-.0658</td>
<td>.1993</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Size</td>
<td>-.2910</td>
<td>.2514</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Experience</td>
<td>.3056</td>
<td>.1807</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Aid</td>
<td>.0688</td>
<td>.0142</td>
<td>4.72*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Funding (k)</td>
<td>1.1041</td>
<td>1.1399</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Poverty</td>
<td>-.0955</td>
<td>.0246</td>
<td>3.88*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Education</td>
<td>-.0337</td>
<td>.0294</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-Square: .67
Adjusted R-Square: .66
F: 83.19
N: 582

*p < .05

Note: Coefficients for individual years not reported.


appears to be a different matter. Here the outcomes are complementary: the higher one minority pass rate, the higher the other (even when school quality is controlled for). Clearly, these policy outcomes do not represent a zero-sum situation. Indeed, policy outcomes of this type could represent an interdependent relationship and as such meet the criteria that Belanger and Pinard (1991) suggest reduces competition and conflict among ethnic groups.
The direct effects of school board members on increasing the conflict over administrative positions but the lack of such effects from administrators on teachers or teachers on students, implies that electoral politics might simply be more conflictual than bureaucratic politics. Perhaps the simplicity of election campaigns reduces issues to “us versus them” issues more readily than the complexities of bureaucratic politics. Such a conclusion at this point, however, would be pure speculation since the present study is the first to compare these sets of relationships in this manner.

**CONCLUSIONS**

McClain (1993) identified three scenarios for minority-minority relationships: competition, independence, and cooperation. Our answer is that it all depends. We find that in the education arena, some relationships between African Americans and Latinos are characterized by conflict and competition. We also find that, in other areas, the relationship is complementary. As might be expected, where scarce positions are involved, e.g., school administrators and faculty, competition is the norm. There is after all only one school principal in each school. If the principal is African American, she cannot be a Latina. There usually is only one teacher in each classroom. If that teacher is a Latino, he cannot be African American. We do not suggest that the competition for scarce positions is necessarily a function of race and ethnicity. It maybe a natural consequence of scarcity. Such a situation, however, contributes to the competition between two groups generally on the outside attempting to break into the inner group.

In the area of student performance, however, the two minority groups are complementary. If African-American student scores are higher, so are Latino scores. At first blush, it would appear as if either the independence or cooperative scenarios could describe these relationships. We believe, however, that the relationship is complementary rather than independent. Previous research on minority education has established that the presence of minority board members contribute to increased numbers of minority administrators and then to increased numbers of minority teachers. This research suggests also that the impact of these increases on minority students is positive. In such cases, for example, more minority students are placed in gifted and talented programs or provide access to other more challenging curricula (Polinard et al. 1994). We suggest it would follow that one effect of these changes in the long run would be higher minority student scores on such standardized tests as the TAAS. Although that research focused on co-ethnic minority relationships (i.e., Latino board members, administrators, teachers and students), we suggest that the presence of a minority teacher could have a positive impact on the minority students in the classroom, even if the race/ethnicity of the teacher and students is different. Previous research also notes that in this context minority gains do not come at a cost to Anglo performance (Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999). Policies that improve student performance can be...
designed to benefit all students; our data show clearly that intra-minority student performance is not a zero-sum game. While there may only be one principal or teacher, and, consequently, only one minority in that position, all students may score high on standardized tests.

Although the purpose of this study was empirical, it has ramifications for coalition strategies. We think that coalitions are easier to form when the payoffs are not obviously zero sum. In the strategic choice to use policy or patronage as the basis for a coalition, some policies, those with a non-zero sum nature, may be more promising. Not all policies, however, can be turned into positive-sum games. Coalition leaders need to seek out specific policies with potential positive-sum characteristics. While we do not intend to down play the importance of jobs, especially jobs with discretion to influence policy outcomes, a focus on some types of policy outcomes could offer the promise of providing benefits for a larger number of persons. A policy focus, therefore, might be an appropriate way to restructure the political agenda involving questions of race and ethnicity. Future research on minority coalitions needs to address which policies under what types of circumstances are amenable to coalition building via cooperative strategies.

REFERENCES


---

Received: July 24, 2003
Accepted for Publication: August 26, 2003
kmeier@politics.tamu.edu