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Introduction

Latinos, now the largest minority group in the United States, have been described by the media on countless occasions as the "sleeping giant" of U.S. politics. Reviewing the existing research on Hispanics and their representation in the policy arena, one wonders if the somnambulists are not Hispanics themselves but those who study and write about policy-making. Hispanics share a history of discrimination and the problems of anti-immigrant sentiment and lack of progress in the American school system. How do they respond to these challenges? Who leads this diverse community? How do they make their voices heard in the policy-making process? On questions such as these, the literature is largely silent. This book takes two issues (namely, charter schools and immigration) and the two largest national Hispanic interest groups (the National Council of La Raza [NCLR] and the League of United Latin American Citizens [LULAC]) and reveals the character and substance of the leaders in the Hispanic advocacy community.

Interest groups are important players in Washington policy-making, and political leaders often look to membership organizations (a subset of the interest group world) for the support of particular American constituencies. Consider the influence wielded by an organization such as AARP, which in 2006 had thirty-eight million members and one billion dollars in revenue. Those considerable resources and its ability to mobilize huge numbers of older Americans on legislative issues make it a formidable voice for older Americans in Washington. Similarly, in the Hispanic community NCLR and LULAC, the two major membership organizations, are regularly courted by political hopefuls and are part of the policy-making process. At NCLR's 2005 conference, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton remarked that "NCLR has for forty years been a strong voice insisting that the American dream knows no boundaries of language, color, or national

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origin." At LULAC's 2005 national convention, the chairmen of the Democratic and Republican national committees were in attendance in an effort to court the members of the country's oldest Latino organization.

Among the major Hispanic interest groups, NCLR and LULAC are in many ways comparable; they have significant grassroots memberships, a strong presence in Washington, and are decades old. When they advocate for particular policy positions, the assumption is that they are speaking for the Hispanic community. Particularly as the number of voting Hispanics grows, politicians are only too happy to consider the views of these Hispanic leadership organizations, and may well assume that positions supported by organizations such as LULAC and NCLR reflect the will of Hispanics nationwide. Upon closer inspection, however, the organizations are strikingly different and take policy positions that would not have been predicted by looking just at their histories. For example, NCLR, generally thought of as an organization with strong ties to the Democratic Party, launched an aggressive campaign promoting charter schools, an issue whose support initially came from conservatives. Surprisingly, the historically more ideologically conservative and pro-Republican LULAC maintains a neutral if not hostile stance toward charter schools. In the debate over immigration, NCLR has over time moderated its position, while LULAC has moved from a conservative position to a much more radical one.

Who lead these organizations, and whom do they represent? Are they representing all Hispanics, or a particular subset who are their members? How do they form their policy positions, and what are the internal dynamics that affect their decision-making process? Political scientists know how interest groups form, attract, and retain members, and how their various strategies and tactics influence the policy process. Less well understood is the process sandwiched in between: how they choose from among various possible policy goals. What explains the adoption of controversial policy preferences? As these particular organizations work toward improving the lives of Hispanics, how do they decide which policies to endorse? Specifically, why would one Hispanic civil rights group support charter schools and another oppose them? Why have their positions on immigration varied? How these organizations make these agenda-setting decisions may help us understand whom exactly they represent. Are they representing a narrow band of community-based organizations, their members, or do they accurately reflect the interests of the larger Hispanic community?

As the Hispanic population grows and issues like immigration and language continue to capture the attention of citizens and legislators alike, a deeper understanding of these organizations is essential. Whether or not they accurately represent the views of the majority of Hispanics, while important, is almost beside the point; the reality is that they are

perceived as leaders of the Hispanic community and will likely continue to represent Hispanics in Washington policy debates.

This book, using case studies of charter school and immigration policy, tries to provide a timely and informative portrait of the two largest and most widely known Hispanic interest groups. This aspect of the work should be of interest to a wide audience, including policy-makers, researchers and students in the public policy and Hispanic studies arenas, and the general public. The book also attempts to provide an important theoretical contribution, which will be of interest to those who study interest groups and public policy. By applying John Kingdon's multiple-streams model to interest-group decision-making, the book expands on Kingdon's valuable contribution and provides a new direction for the study of both interest groups and agenda-setting.

Definition of Terms

The term "interest group" is defined differently across various disciplines, and the term "Hispanic" is not well understood by all readers, so some definitions are in order.

Interest Group

The lack of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary consensus on the definition of an "interest group" contributes to difficulties evaluating and building on interest-group literature (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). In sociology, interest groups are defined by their voluntary nature and their intent to make demands on the government (Knoke 1989). Interest groups have been defined narrowly as collective-action organizations, "those who seek nonmarket solutions to particular individual or group problems, maintain formal criteria for membership on a voluntary basis, may employ persons under the authority of organizational leaders; and provide formally democratic procedures to involve members in policy decisions" (Knoke 1989, 7). Others recognize that interest groups may indeed pursue market solutions to group problems, and that their decision-making process may not be democratic. In addition, membership as a defining characteristic of an interest group is by no means universal; in political science, definitions vary widely. Interest groups have been defined broadly as those with organized representation in Washington, more narrowly as those organizations which have a voluntary membership base, and more practically as those groups which are part of a published directory, which can be the basis of an empirical study (Baumgartner and Jones 1993; Baumgartner and Leech 1998).

Often equated with interest groups, social-movement organizations have specifically been defined as formal complex organizations that identify with and seek to implement the goals of a broad social movement (McCarthy and Zald 1977). The political science approach to interest groups, however, is more interested in the organizations that have already successfully transitioned from challenger to established entity in the policy-making universe (Tilly 1978). Those interested specifically in political activity define interest groups as organizations that "seek joint ends through political action" and that "have collective goals that are politically relevant" (Schlozman and Tierney 1986, 10). This definition excludes organizations that do not attempt to affect policy outcomes, such as service-oriented nonprofits, and includes organizations in the private sector whose primary concern lies elsewhere but nevertheless have an interest in the policy process.

In order to address the variation in definitions used, numerous recently edited books have equated interest groups with "factions, organized interests, pressure groups, and special interests" (Cigler and Loomis 2002, 3) and with "special interests or factions" (Herrnson et al. 2005, xiv). For the present volume, the definition of "interest group" is empirically derived; my interest is in studying the mature, major Hispanic membership organizations with headquarters in Washington DC. Therefore, the political science definition of an interest group as being a mature organization with organized representation in Washington whose mission involves seeking solutions for a particular group of people is appropriate.

Hispanic

The estimated Hispanic population of the United States as of July 1, 2006, was 43.7 million, 14.7% of the nation's total population, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest minority racial/ethnic group. But what does "Hispanic" really mean, and to whom is this a meaningful identity? Is "Latino" more appropriate? Or are the subgroups so different that any effort to lump them together is problematic (Baker et al. 2000)? Is it accurate or appropriate to collect such a diverse group into one catchall category?

In 1980, for the first time, individuals were asked to identify their race as well as whether or not they were of Hispanic origin on the decennial census. As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, "Hispanic" refers to people whose place of origin is Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, or Spanish-speaking Central or South American countries. The Census Bureau did not act alone; an advisory committee with significant representation from the Mexican American advocacy community was an active participant in the process of

developing an inclusive term for individuals of Spanish origin (U.S. Census Bureau 2002). Hispanic political elites played a major role in the development and the acceptance of the "Hispanic" label (Gomez 1992). Elite Mexican American actors, including members of Congress and organizational leaders, readily admitted that they had begun to use the term "Hispanic" instead of "Chicano" by the early 1980s (Gomez 1992). Leaders found the use of "Hispanic" to more accurately represent the changing demographics of their constituencies. Others felt that the term "Chicano," in addition to referring only to Mexican Americans, was associated with a militant movement that was out of step with the more conservative political climate of the 1980s (Gomez 1992). Ethnic labels are also situationally mediated; a Puerto Rican may identify himself as a Puerto Rican in one context but as a Hispanic in another (Padilla 1986).

As to the character or identity of the Hispanic population, recent political debates and media portrayals might lead one to believe that the Hispanic population in the United States is dominated by very recent immigrants, most of whom crept over the border between the United States and Mexico in the dark of night. In fact, of the 43.7 million Hispanics, fully 60%—25.9 million—are native-born. The remaining 40% of Hispanics, about half of whom have arrived in the United States since 1990, come from many different countries, each with its own traditions and history. While Mexicans still make up the majority of Hispanics (65.5%), that lead is shrinking as other subgroups grow. There are increasingly significant numbers of Central and South Americans (14.2%), Puerto Ricans (8.6%), Cubans (3.7%), and other Hispanics (8.0%) (Owens 2006). Geographically, while more Hispanics continue to live in the West, they are also moving to cities and counties in the South and elsewhere that have never played host to Hispanics (Wortham et al. 2002; Hamann 2003). In 2006, a quarter of all Hispanics lived in the West (26.6%), but 14.5% Hispanics were living in the South and 11.5% in the Northeast. Looking at education, there are also differences between subgroups. While no Hispanic subgroup had high school graduation rates as high as non-Hispanic whites, there is considerable within-group variation; only half of Central Americans twenty-five years of age or over have completed high school, compared to eight in ten South Americans (50.5% of Central Americans, 82.6% of South Americans) (Owens 2006).

The profile above suggests wide disparities in the character or identity of the Hispanic population; but when socioeconomic issues are considered, they tend to share a great deal, especially when compared to the non-Hispanic population. They are twice as likely to lack health insurance, less than half as likely to have completed high school or obtained a bachelor's degree, and almost twice as likely to be living below the

poverty line, when compared to non-Hispanics. In addition, Hispanics share cultural characteristics, such as familism and the importance of the Spanish language (Tatum 1997). Finally, there are also structural forces that lead to the creation of a politicized Hispanic/Latino identity (Padilla 1986; J. A. Garcia 2003). These include the shared burdens of discrimination, anti-immigrant sentiment, and educational underachievement.

The Gap in the Interest Group Literature

The very existence of interest groups has long posed a puzzle for political scientists. During the 1950s, pluralist theorists argued that individuals naturally mobilize to right felt wrongs or pursue collective goals (Truman 1951). In the 1960s, scholars rejected the assumption that all individuals had an equal ability to organize; as Schattschneider so eloquently states, "The flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper class accent" (1960, 34). In a quite different microeconomic vein, Mancur Olson (1965) suggested that rational individuals are unlikely to join organizations if they could "free-ride" on the benefits of membership without paying their dues, and group formation was even less likely. But of course interest groups representing marginalized populations did form and survive. In the Hispanic community, several important organizations represent Hispanic interests in Washington, the courts, and in communities across the nation. Organizations such as these have shown they have the ability to attract members, maintain their organizations, and influence policy-making. On these subjects, a great deal has been written (Baumgartner and Leech 1998).

A close look at the study of interest groups over the last several decades reveals two major streams in the study of groups. The first—demand aggregation—has to do with how groups mobilize and how they attract and keep members. The second—group impact—covers what groups do and to what effect in the political arena. Following Olson, many of the questions asked and answered have occurred in the first arena. Within demand aggregation, scholars agree that much more is known about group mobilization than forty years ago (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). The various questions associated with the collective-action dilemma have been the focus of significant new findings. It is clear that groups do not have equal access to the political system, and that the interest group system is biased in important ways. The mobilization studies have made as much progress as they have because they share a unifying paradigm: the collective action logic laid out by Olson (Baumgartner and Leech 1998). They share a common theoretical outlook and a common set of questions.

Regarding group impact, studies—and, in particular, large-scale surveys—have documented the wide range of lobbying tactics and strategies that groups use to pursue their goals. While it is not entirely clear when groups choose particular tactics over others (grassroots activity versus face-to-face contacts in Washington, for instance), there is a solid understanding of the options available to organized interests in their pursuit of a goal. Less consensus exists on the influence of political action committees (PACs), with some studies finding considerable influence and others none at all (Cigler 1991), and the effect of lobbying activity has not been successfully measured (Baumgartner and Leech 1998).

While progress has been made in some areas, numerous authors have recognized a gap in the interest group literature—namely, how goals are formed. This process falls between the two main interests described above: how organizations form, attract, and maintain their membership, on the one hand, and how they affect public policy, on the other. The questions surrounding the internal organization of interest groups have been understudied (Berry 1994), and it is recognized that political scientists have not opened the organizational black box (Browne 1977). Tierney's comment on the subject exemplifies an increasingly recognized area in need of study: "How do organizations go about deciding what their interests are, and what policy goals should be pursued? In view of the centrality of this question to political science, it is striking that it has received relatively little attention" (1994, 38). The importance of goal formation has been acknowledged in the literature, but has rarely been addressed. In his important study *The Organization of Interests*, Moe says, "[T]he major value of a theory of interest groups derives from what it can say about group goals and, in particular, how they are formulated as a function of member goals" (1980, 73). Rothenberg finds that "the obvious logical inference to be derived from statements about how relevant goals are—that a voluminous, detailed literature exists that analyzes the importance of the internal operations of interest groups in goal formation—is incorrect. There is a dearth of empirical investigations, and only a modicum of theoretical work, inquiring into the crucial linkage between members and goals" (1992, 159; see Moe 1980).

Once an organization forms but before it develops a strategy to impact public policy, it must decide how to allocate resources as well as choose from among policy alternatives. These actions have been described as goal formation (Rothenberg 1992). The interest group literature does not identify "clear-cut decision rules" for the decision-making process within interest groups (Berry 1997, 90), and scholars have largely ignored the relationship between internal dynamics of groups and external lobbying activities (Gray and Lowery 1996). Anecdotal evidence suggests that

many interest groups, when presented with a new policy debate, have an internal calculus that they use to decide what position to adopt. This involves asking questions such as:

- Will pursuing this goal or participating in this campaign benefit our constituency? Will it directly benefit our organization?
- What is the opportunity cost? Given limited resources, what are we sacrificing in order to pursue this policy goal?
- What is the net gain? How much of our resources do we have to expend and how does that relate to the potential gain?
- What are our chances for success?
- What is our added value? Is there another organization or coalition that is already pursuing this goal and if so, what do we contribute?

On this process and on the key variables that determine decision-making outcomes, the literature is virtually silent (Rothenberg 1992; Malen 2001). Citing the well-known ailments of the interest group literature—the methodological difficulties of the study of interest groups, the sporadic attention to the study of groups by scholars, and the fragmentation of the research—Lawrence Rothenberg proposes an integrated perspective on organizations (Rothenberg 1992). His study focuses on groups, not the interest group system, and pays close attention to issues regarding the role of the membership in goal formation, the conversion of contributors' preferences into goals, and the subsequent translation of goals into policy. Rothenberg suggests that these three domains of study within interest groups are related, though this is rarely recognized (more recent scholarship recognizes the interrelatedness of the influence-production process; see Lowery and Gray 2004). Several of his findings are relevant to the present book. First, membership is constrained by leadership decisions; any study of membership is incomplete without considering the motivations and actions of the organization's leadership. Second, goal formation can only be understood if the means by which the opinions of contributors—ranging from those of the individual to those of the foundation—are integrated into the analysis of these leadership decisions. Third, whether a group is influential or not and why an organization might choose to engage an issue on which it is not likely to be influential can be properly explained only if member motivations and the internal decision processes are understood.

Rothenberg tests both Olson's and Michels's theories by looking at the goal-formation process at Common Cause as it decides to pursue an anti-MX missile campaign. He reasons that based on Olson's logic, if there is no connection between members' preferences and a group's collective goods

goals, goal formation will be accomplished largely by the organization's leadership, perhaps with input from some of the organization's more influential membership. Here we see that Olson's and Michels' theories are complementary; Olson predicts that the leadership would drive goal formation, and Michels suggests that the group's goals would move from radical toward moderate based on the leadership's desire to maintain a stable organization.

There have been considerable revisions to the Olsonian approach that suggest that organizational goals cannot be taken as the product of a dictatorship by group leaders, and Rothenberg confirms this view: "Once it is accepted that collective goods, purposive rewards, and member learning can play important roles in decision making, the likelihood that objectives are the result of an interactive process between members and leaders increases dramatically" (1992, 176). Rothenberg suggests, however, that there is a bias in the attention members receive; those who are more active or have more political or financial interest are more likely to be taken into consideration as groups form their goals. The study findings confirm his original hypotheses: "[L]eaders did not arbitrarily make decisions by themselves, shared interests were not taken for granted, and pure representative democracy was not practiced. Rather, activists' opinions were given special weight, credence was given to the views of other contributors, and leaders exercised discretion as well" (186). The findings reveal an interconnectedness between member preferences and the development of organizational goals. Building on Rothenberg's finding that understanding internal decision-making is critical to the study of interest groups, the present book revises John Kingdon's multiple-streams model and applies it at the organizational level.

Analytical Framework

The limited attention to goal formation within the study of interest groups requires exploration of other research areas that might provide guidance for this study. Organization theory is the obvious first area that must be explored. After careful review, organization theory provides only limited direction. March's *Primer on Decision Making* concludes: "The indeterminacies of decision intelligence and the complications in achieving it make the pursuit of decision intelligence frustrating. . . . modern theories of collective decision making over time are conspicuous for their failure to resolve such problems in the definition of decision intelligence" (March and Heath 1994, 270).

While organization theory itself did not provide a model, it did inspire the public policy theory, which I have in turn adapted to fit decision-making at the interest group level. Decision-making within organizations

was first characterized using a stage-based, rational-choice model, which later evolved into a bounded rationality model. Working from bounded rationality, Michael Cohen, James March, and Johan Olsen (1972) developed a model in which ambiguity and inconsistency are the dominant characteristics of organizational decision-making: the garbage can theory. It is with the subsequent adaptation of the garbage can theory to explain agenda-setting in the public policy arena by John Kingdon (1984) that a potential model for understanding the goal-formation process in interest groups emerges.

The analytical framework for the present book takes the actors that interest group research suggests are important to goal formation and melds them with Kingdon's public-policy agenda-setting model. In this section I first summarize the actors identified in the interest group literature, provide a brief overview of organization theory, and then introduce Kingdon's agenda-setting model. Finally, I combine these elements in a framework that I use to guide my case study data collection and analysis.

Decision-Makers within Interest Groups

While goal formation has not been the focus of research on interest groups, multiple theories of interest group behavior can be applied to the goal-formation process.

- Member preferences: Building on Olson, Moe (1980) suggests that leaders will select policy alternatives preferred by members, or at least not offend those members.
- Patrons' interests: Influenced by Walker (1983), Marquez (2003b) and Ortiz (1991) claim that an organization's patrons (organizations or individuals who provide operating monies, such as foundations and corporations) will have significant influence, or at least the organization's leaders will not go against patrons' interests or preferences.
- Personal preferences of leaders: Michels (1958) argued that organizational leadership would make decisions that would ensure survival of the organization, with little regard for member preferences. While Sabatier and McLaughlin's (1990) commitment theory suggests that organization leaders are first and foremost committed to the goals of the organization, Ortiz (1991) makes a connection between Hispanic organization leaders' desire for organizational survival and career advancement and their approach to fund-raising.

These theories, however, assume the importance of one variable over all others. Rothenberg makes an important contribution when he identifies multiple variables in the goal-formation process. According to

Rothenberg, a subgroup of individuals, including the most active members, funding sources, and leaders, influence goal formation. The present book intends to build on Rothenberg's findings and improve our understanding of the goal-formation process.

Organization Theory, Garbage Cans, and Agenda-Setting

The idea that human beings rationally make decisions that are likely to optimally benefit themselves has heavily influenced the study of economics and much of social science, including the study of organizational decision-making (Green and Shapiro 1994). Rational-choice theory assumes that organizations make decisions based on four factors: a precise knowledge of the available alternatives, a full understanding of the consequences of each alternative, a set of consistent values that can be used to compare alternatives, and a decision rule that can be consistently used to choose from among alternatives (March 1999). In addition, numerous studies of organizational decision-making have assumed, as in the study of policy decision-making (Easton 1965), that the process occurs in stages (Mintzberg et al. 1976; Nutt 1984). Over decades, this rationality and orderliness have been moderated by some authors to reflect the reality of decision-making. Beginning with the classic article in the study of policy decision-making, Lindblom (1959) suggested that decision-making in organizations is neither rational nor comprehensive. Rather, he suggests that decision-making is done recursively in successive limited comparisons, given changing values, available alternatives, and limited information and resources.

A number of scholars pursued this argument, and have agreed that decision-makers in organizations are limited by the information available to them and the resources they are able to contribute to the decision-making process (Cyert and March 1992; March and Simon 1993). In addition to bounded rationality, organizational decision-making is further restricted by the presence of ambiguity. Preferences are not clear, are varied among the individual actors involved, and are likely to change over time (March 1999). This is best illustrated by garbage can theory (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972; Cohen et al. 1986).

Garbage can theory attempts to explain the decision process in organizations characterized as "organized anarchies." These organizations are distinguished by three general properties. First, they have "problematic"—that is, inconsistent and ill-defined—preferences. Second, they operate under unclear technology—that is, their own processes are not understood by their members. Third, they suffer from fluid participation in decision-making as participants come and go due to time constraints and competing interests. This may not apply to the entire organization all of the time, but may describe a portion of an organization's activities.

A choice opportunity within an organization such as this can be described as a garbage can into which both problems and solutions are placed. There may be multiple cans available, and problems and solutions will be sorted depending on the availability of cans. A decision is the result of several independent streams of activity. Four streams are identified: problems, solutions, participants, and choice opportunities. This model suggests that problems and solutions are attached to choices not because this combination is the best alternative but because of their temporal proximity (March 1999).

Agenda-Setting: Streams, Windows, and Entrepreneurs

As in organizational decision-making, the policy-making process is complex. Multiple actors operating on a variety of levels play shifting roles over the decade or more involved in the institutionalization of a policy change (Sabatier 1999). Early analysis of the policy-making process focused on the work of government actors and assumed no external or environmental influences (Lasswell 1956). This framework was revised to include actors outside of government but who affect the agenda (Howlett and Ramesh 2003). Understanding the activities and interactions of policy actors both inside and outside of government is a key facet of understanding the policy process.

Numerous theoretical frameworks have been developed in the last several decades in an effort to explain and predict the policy process at the federal level. Developed by John Kingdon, multiple streams is one of seven major theoretical frameworks of the policy process (Sabatier 1999). Kingdon's model was influenced by the garbage can model (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972). Going full circle, this study takes Kingdon's theoretical framework and applies it to the organizational level. While Kingdon and others who have subsequently used the model maintain that the policy process is complex and often ambiguous (Zahariadis 2003), the multiple streams framework provides more explanatory power than is possible if one conceptualizes the process as a garbage can, and it also enables us to systematically explore the organizational decision-making process.

The stages heuristic, a highly influential framework for studying the policy process, divides policy-making into a series of stages. Harold Lasswell first developed a framework of seven stages; more recently the stages have been divided into four broader categories—agenda-setting, policy formation and legitimation, implementation, and evaluation (Sabatier

1999). Unlike earlier work on the policy process, Kingdon goes beyond an examination of the stages to consider how one moves from one stage to the next; this method of transforming inputs into outputs has often been referred to as the "black box" of the policy process (Sabatier 1999). Taking the streams and the choice opportunity from garbage cans, Kingdon considers specifically the agenda-setting stage of the policy process. An agenda is a list of subjects to which officials are paying attention. The agenda-setting process narrows the set of subjects and allows subjects to move from the government agenda (those items to which people are paying attention) to the decision agenda (those primed for authoritative action). In effect, then, the agenda-setting process involves a series of decisions that result in the adoption or rejection of a policy alternative.

As illustrated in figure 1, five major elements shape the multiple-streams framework. The first three elements are the streams of problems, policy alternatives, and political activity. Policy windows, the fourth element, are opportunities for the coupling of streams; and policy entrepreneurs, the fifth element, are searching for opportunities—open windows or changes in streams—that will allow them to attach their solution to a problem. Each of these will be reviewed in turn, and the adaptation to the interest group level will be explained.
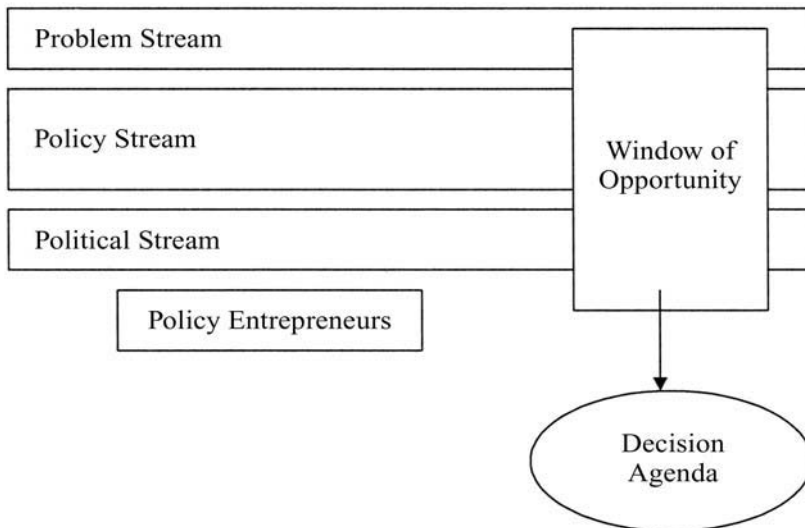

Figure 1. Agenda-setting process

THE PROBLEM STREAM

According to Kingdon, three factors can bring problems to the attention of government officials. First, the release of indicators such as poverty rates or educational attainment figures can cause an issue to surface in the problem stream. Second, a focusing event, such as a crisis or disaster, can also elevate an issue to a problem. The obvious example of this is the terrorist attack on 9/11 and the subsequent governmental attention to the problem of U.S. vulnerability to terrorism. Third, feedback, such as a review of a major federal program, can often provide a starting point that reveals a much larger problem ripe for action.

At the interest group level, group members are an important influence in the problem stream. Organizational leadership may observe a grassroots movement among their members and others to address a problem that had not been a priority for the organization. Leadership of a national organization may recognize a problem only after their local membership begins to clamor for assistance in their efforts to respond to a problem. Government action can also raise the status of a problem as a result of studies of existing programs or new policy proposals.

THE POLICY STREAM AND POLICY ENTREPRENEURS

The policy stream is where policy proposals are developed according to their own incentives and selection criteria. More vividly, Kingdon describes the development of policy proposals as a "primeval soup." Like biological natural selection, ideas develop and then fade, only to develop again, and may take considerable time to come to life. This activity occurs within a policy community, which includes all those actors in a given policy area. These specialists are policy entrepreneurs, recognized as an important part of the agenda-setting process (Kingdon 1984; Mintrom 1997). Similar to entrepreneurs in the economic marketplace, policy entrepreneurs attempt to bring their preferred solution to the government agenda. These are people willing to invest their resources in return for future policies they favor. They identify opportunities to attach their solution to a problem, and may adjust either their solution or the problem definition in order to reach the government agenda.

Within interest groups, policy proposals are developed or adapted by policy entrepreneurs who are interested in gaining organizational approval for their policy proposal or position on a policy debate within the organization. These entrepreneurs are also influenced by policy activity outside of the organization; they may latch on to a movement and revise the idea to meet their organization's (or membership's) needs. I also hypothesize that while entrepreneurs within an organization do not have the power to authorize pursuit of a policy alternative, once an alternative is endorsed

by organization leadership the presence of a policy entrepreneur heavily influences the scope of the resulting project or initiative.

THE POLITICAL STREAM

The political stream is a powerful force for agenda-setting. A number of factors can influence the political stream, including a change in national mood or a change in presidential administration. Interest-group pressure campaigns can also spark activity in the political stream. As an idea gains momentum in the political stream, political actors build bargaining coalitions in order to ensure elements they consider vital are included in the policy change under consideration.

As in Kingdon's model, the political stream is critical at the interest group level. Policy entrepreneurs need the support of key decision-makers in order to develop their ideas into funded programs. Key actors in the political stream include the organization's board of directors and the staff with decision-making authority. While issues outside of the organization become defined as problems and move to the government agenda, organizations may feel compelled to respond to the alternatives being considered. Also, as the visibility of a policy alternative increases, new funding opportunities may arise. The preferences of funders may influence the extent to which an organization's leadership pursues a policy alternative. Leaders may also respond to pressure from members. Other factors that may influence the goal-formation process may include the ideological orientation of the group and the preferences of allies in the political process, especially elected officials or other groups.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Kingdon finds that when the three streams are joined—that is, when there is complete coupling—problems are most likely to reach the decision agenda. This coupling occurs with the aid of a policy entrepreneur and, importantly, by the opening of a "window of opportunity." An open policy window could result from a regular reauthorization or some other major event in one of the streams. Open windows present opportunities for complete couplings. Kingdon suggests that windows open due to changes in the political stream or in the problem stream, when a problem captures the attention of officials. One revision to the streams model suggests that windows may not be temporary, as Kingdon proposes (Sharp 1994). In addition, Zahariadis (1996) suggests that when windows originate in the problem stream, they are likely to find a solution to a given problem, whereas windows originating in the political stream will search for a problem that fits an existing solution, because adopting policies is more important for a political actor than actually solving problems.

Windows of opportunity at the interest group level may result from a board or presidential initiative, a call from the membership for action on a problem, or an event outside of the organization, such as a change in presidential administration or an opportunity for funding. Funders, leaders, and members can all potentially play a role in the opening of the window or response to an open window. As in Kingdon's model, the window is most likely to open in the problem stream or the political stream.

Agenda-setting—the process by which problems are recognized, connected to a policy alternative or solution, and placed on the government agenda for action—has typically been applied to the government level. This case study finds that the framework Kingdon developed to illuminate the processes of agenda-setting and alternative specification can be applied to the goal-formation process at the interest group level. In order to accurately represent the process at the interest group level, the three groups identified by the interest group literature—funders, members, and leaders—must be included in the revised model. This is illustrated in the revised Kingdon model below (figure 2).
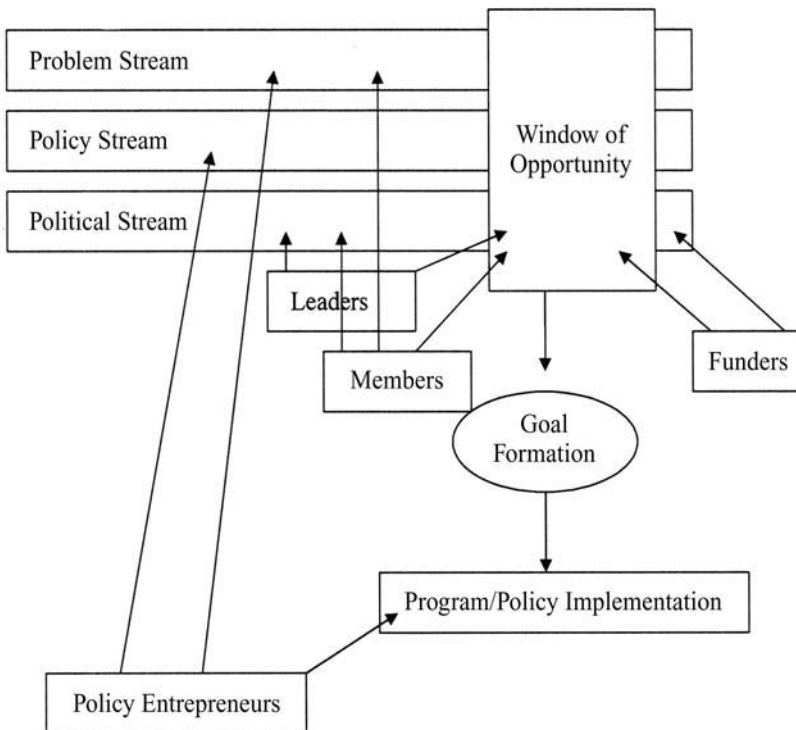
Figure 2. Proposed interest-group goal-formation process

This revised model makes it possible to test several theories of interest group behavior and determine if one of the three actors—members, funders, and leaders—alone drives goal formation as suggested by interest group theorists or if, as Rothenberg suggests, multiple interests interact. Combining these actors with the five variables in Kingdon's model adds complexity and provides a fuller picture of both the actors and the contexts that drive goal formation.

Methodology

Data collection began with a document review in order to establish the positions of the two organizations on charter schools and immigration and to determine what procedures if any were followed in the development of their position. I conducted preliminary interviews in spring 2004 at NCLR. These interviews were the beginning of an iterative process. Conversations with senior staff provided encouragement for my hypothesis that NCLR's endorsement of charter schools marked a change in its education agenda.

Formal interviews and additional document analyses reflect the framework I adapted for this study. The individuals interviewed fall into five categories: board members, organization leaders, organization members, organizational senior staff, and members of the education task force for each organization. Board member interviews provided insight into the activity in the political stream, the influence on decision-makers of activity in the problem stream, and the circumstances surrounding the window of opportunity. Organization leaders, as intermediaries between the boards and the staff, speak to the influence of funders, leaders, and members, and triangulate board members' comments regarding activity in the political and problem streams. Organizational senior staff provided further triangulation, and also shared knowledge of activity in the policy stream and the role of the policy entrepreneur. Members of the education task force were key informants on the window of opportunity, the policy stream, and the problem stream. Finally, organization members provided their perspective on the extent to which members' priorities are translated into organizational policy priorities. The influence of funders was determined through interviews with the range of interview participants. Twenty interviews were conducted for the NCLR case studies and fourteen interviews were conducted for the LULAC case studies. Using a semi-structured interview format and a detailed interview protocol, these interviews were sufficient to ensure compatibility across the cases. Substantial latitude was provided in the interview process for additional unforeseen information to be gathered. All informants were asked to provide written permission to record the interviews and use the material collected for publication.

The interviews lasted approximately one hour each. Some phone interviews were conducted when face-to-face meetings were not possible. Phone interviews and in-person interviews were recorded with permission. Interviews were transcribed for purposes of data analysis. To provide for anonymity, I have identified interviewees only by their organization and their general position within the organization (such as staff, board member, former board member).

Organization of the Book

Chapter 1 has presented the introduction, statement of the problem, a review of the relevant interest group literature, and methodology. Chapter 2 is an overview of the actors that influence policy-making on issues of concern to Hispanics, and provides further discussion of the decision to study NCLR and LULAC rather than any of the other national Hispanic organizations. Chapter 3 provides a detailed profile of the two interest groups that are the focus of this book: NCLR and LULAC. Chapter 4 lays out the history of Hispanic-education advocacy efforts in order to provide a context for the charter schools debate. Chapter 5 analyzes goal formation at National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens on charter schools, and chapter 6 offers a brief history of immigration policy and an analysis of goal formation on immigration policy at both organizations. Chapter 7 offers cross-site analyses and findings to emerge from the study as well as conclusions and recommendations for further study.