Current Research Agenda
Thomas Ogorzalek

My research agenda is substantively situated at the intersection of urban politics, race and ethnicity, and American Political Development, and focuses on questions surrounding the complex relationship between diversity and democracy. I apply a variety of methods to recurrent and new research questions around these themes, including original data collection, exploratory data analysis, regression techniques, historical textual analysis and interpretation, Geographic Informations Systems, quantitative spatial analyses, and natural and survey experiments, and I continually add to my repertoire of tools when appropriate, finding and learning new ways to develop perspectives for inquiry and understand complex social reality. In all of my research, I employ historical and institutional perspectives, and emphasize relevance to contemporary political phenomena.

The Cities on the Hill: Urban Institutions in National Politics

This book project seeks to link two central recurring and related questions in the study of American politics: What strategic decisions and social forces drove the midcentury dissolution of the New Deal coalition? And what role do space and place have in explaining the contemporary partisan divide? These two questions intersect in the political development of the New Deal political order, which was itself characterized by an urban-rural divide along with its more obvious sectional tensions. The seeds of the New Deal’s dissolution were sown in its very founding, with a fractious mix including a large new bloc-of-blocs drawn from relatively progressive, diverse, pluralist urban centers (and eventually incorporating the African American constituencies from those places) tentatively joining forces with the stalwart rural, conservative Southern bloc. In accounting for the coalition’s ultimate demise, most accounts focus on the pathologies of the conservative racial order that took shape over the 1940s-1960s: the decision by Southern elites to "defect" from the Democratic coalition in defense of their regional racial order, or the appeals of the Repub-
lican "Southern Strategy" to regain national political relevance. An alternative strain of research, within which this project is situated, focuses on the other side of the alliance. This perspective engages the process by which Democrats, particularly urban Democrats, whose rank-and-file constituents were often not particularly liberal on racial matters, came to choose their local-rival African-American copartisans over their national-ally Southern copartisans, knowingly risking their legislative party's routine majority status for a policy less than central to most of their constituents.

Using a variety of quantitative techniques and qualitative evidence from Congressional sources and drawing on the secondary literature on local politics in large cities, this project argues that city delegations are generally more cohesive than their demographics would predict, that local party organizations help bring about that cohesion, and that representatives from urban localities with strong local party organizations were more likely than non-urban and non-party-oriented representatives to support the African-American position on contentious civil rights issues during the crucial period leading up to major Civil Rights legislation, even when we account for party and the district-level racial composition. I thus argue that urbanity and local partisan strength each predisposed representatives to overcome the challenges of local racial conflict and pursue a policy agenda compatible with the goals of the "transformative-egalitarian" political order, even though such behavior imperiled the national party's majority status because it was anathema to the coalition's Southern wing. The urban bloc chose an ideological program and local allies over more institutional strategy and the maintenance of white supremacy.

If city "trenches" divide groups in local politics, inclusive municipal boundaries and the local parties that provide order within them may serve as corrals, grouping citizens and legislators who might otherwise join a coalition based on some other shared identity (such as race) at a higher level of politics. Cities established themselves as political communities in which new groups could be incorporated (partially, haltingly, often with resistance from above) into the prevailing local political regime and have their positions supported by that
local ruling order at higher levels of lawmaking. These places became sites of a pluralism that we have not seen in other kinds of built environments.

With urban Democrats more openly dedicated to both statist economic policies and racial progressivism, the full articulation of urban New Deal progressivism could be made as the strange bedfellows decamped to anchor an increasingly rural, conservative Republican party. This move, from a party linking disparate and sometimes antagonistic elements into a more ideologically cohesive congeries of groups, has established itself as one pole of our contemporary "Red-Blue" geographic political alignment, though its strategic position means its agenda, though more coherent, is tempered by new allies. The spatial cleavage is as much about urbanity as region, and I describe it with greater attention to the full continuum of urbanity than usually present in the extant literature on spatial partisanship.

*Ties that Bind: Institutions of Horizontal Integration and Subdelegation Cohesion in Congress*

This working paper, currently under review for publication, tests hypotheses derived from the city delegation theory outlined in my *Cities on the Hill* book manuscript described above. While most theories of legislative behavior emphasize some mix of constituency-level explanations and intracameral party pressures to explain outcomes, this paper examines the effects of institutions external to both a member's district and the national legislature. Local institutions of horizontal integration (IHIs), such as inclusive municipal boundaries and local parties, bind some constituencies together but not others. Linking data from urban politics and congress, and using a new approach for studying legislative cohesion, I find that IHIs, designed to foster local political order, are also associated with heightened cohesion in representation, despite very high levels of district heterogeneity within cities and even when accounting for other similarities between districts. The theory and paper thus highlight a promising institutional mechanism for overcoming challenges associated with diverse constituencies in representation.

This working paper, the first part of a developing book project on progressive politics in large cities, examines the role of Stop, Question, and Frisk policing strategies and the Working Families Party in the 2013 election of Mayor William DeBlasio in New York City, each of which was cited in media analyses of the DeBlasio’s surprising victory. Finding little relationship between the objective conditions of SQF and electoral outcomes, the paper uses GIS data from a range of sources (NYPD, Census, Local Elections Board) to leverage variability in WFP City Council nominations across space in examining the role of the WFP. Using a natural experiment framework, the paper demonstrates that mobilization by this progressive third party accounted for significant gains in turnout, even when we account for other observable and unobservable aspects of New York City’s political landscape. Paradoxically, however, nearly all WFP support came from areas of Brooklyn and Manhattan in which relatively few “working families” live.

Future pieces of this project will examine analogous dynamics in mayoral elections in Chicago and Los Angeles, and make heavy use of public opinion data gathered in the City Neighborhoods Study described below.

City Neighborhoods Study

This original survey project uses an address-based probability sample to study the politics of two major contemporary social phenomena, gentrification and immigration. The relationship between diversity and intergroup comity at the individual level has been characterized by two theories that are in tension with one another: the racial threat hypothesis and the contact hypothesis. Almost all evidence used to test these theories has focused on the relationship between whites and new arrivals (usually African Americans) to a political or residential community, though attention to new forms of diversity in American commu-
nities is growing. This study, which utilizes a multi-city survey conducted in collaboration with Narayani Lasala Blanco (Columbia University), engages this literature with a variety of innovative approaches, employing an address-based, mixed mode approach with oversamples of residents from particular contexts of interest and helping to give insight into the politics of important social trends in rapidly changing neighborhoods in large cities.

First, we try to make one of the first systematic studies of the phenomenon of "reverse" racial threat that accompanies gentrification. Typically, it is a relatively wealthy white in-group that is understood as "threatened". The process of gentrification over the past several decades has represented a different kind of threat, with relatively affluent, often white, developers and newcomers changing neighborhoods in urban centers. It is likely that a different kind of threat may have different effects in communities. Second, we try to measure contact more subtly than is typically achieved in survey research, by asking where and how often respondents spontaneously encounter members of other groups. Third, by locating respondents in space using their addresses, we are able to evaluate the potential spatial effects of distance from the "threat": do long-term residents close to the "frontier" of gentrification have different attitudes toward newcomers than those who live further into the "wilderness" of more homogeneous communities (often largely African American), where they are safer from the threat of higher rents but less able to enjoy the amenities and municipal services that often accompany gentrification? Finally, for some cities, we have embedded a survey experiment, which attempts to test the effect of norms about intergroup relations (embrace diversity and newcomers or worry about them), as well as the effect of the source of the norms (long-term residents or newcomers), on respondents’ attitudes about getting along with others and about government more generally.

The survey also collects information about immigration and political incorporation. Theories of immigration often identify country of origin as a determining factor in the political socialization of newcomers. The City Neighborhood Study focuses additionally on
the role of local political institutions and organizations in the incorporation of immigrants and their subsequent tendency to participate (or not). Combined with interviews of elites, the CNS leverages cross-city variation to argue that the political context of arrival matters is an important explanatory force in the mobilization and participation of immigrants and new citizens.

A multi-city design allows us to test hypotheses about local institutional variation and political culture. Data is being collected: we have completed a pilot survey in New York City and rounds in San Francisco and Los Angeles. Surveys in Chicago, Houston, and Phoenix will be conducted later this year.

**Most Racial, Not Post-racial: The 2008 U.S. Presidential Election in Historical and Comparative Perspective**

This paper manuscript provides new frames of comparison for evaluating Barack Obama’s victory in 2008, which was lauded in some circles as a sign of a diminished importance of race in American politics and the potential dawn of a “post-racial” era. While it is well-known that social inequalities persist across ethnoracial groups and racialized discourse has been resilient, an underlying premise of the notion of post-racial politics—that the election of a minority-race candidate was a marker that the U.S. had transcended racial electoral politics—has not been directly considered. Using Group Voting Fractionalization, a new measure useful in comparing the extent to which electorates are organized along racial lines, this paper identifies an increase in racial voting over the past four decades, and finds that 2008 was a particularly racial election, even when we account for the high level of diversity in the contemporary U.S. Recent electoral politics in the United States have been notably divided along ethnic lines in both historical and cross-national comparative terms. Far from post-racial, the 2008 election must be included in any list of “most-racial” elections. A subsequent subnational analysis identifies drivers of and exceptions to this reality.
Filibuster Vigilantly: The Liminal State and 19th Century U.S. Expansion

Nineteenth-century American territorial expansion was accomplished in a variety of ways: war, purchase, treaty, and annexation are the most famous. This manuscript examines another phenomenon that contributed to American expansion, the filibuster. Filibusters—privately organized and executed invasions of other countries, launched from American soil were banned under Neutrality Laws from 1794 on, but throughout the antebellum era they often received tacit (or, in some cases, material) support from important state actors. By differentially enforcing anti-filibuster laws, the American state was able to manipulate the behavior of these private actors and the outcomes of their adventures, effectively using filibusters as a tool for foreign policy implementation. Through the example of the filibuster, I theorize the contexts in which American state actors have fostered private violence by proxies and argue that liminal institutions like the filibuster are a hallmark of policy implementation in the liberal state. This paper, under review for publication, is the first piece of a broader future study chronicling the ebb and flow of privatized, authorized force in the U.S., with large sections on police, prisons, and private armies. Like actors in other realms of policy, these private providers of a core state interest order blur the line between public and private and force us to directly reconsider our concepts of "state actor" and "state capacity." Finding such liminal actors recurrently engaged in a core, definitional function of the state the legitimate use of force within the territory or on behalf of the nations sheds light on the flexible nature of state power and the techniques used to leverage private power and enhance state capacity for action in the American state.

Democracy, Targeted Redistribution and Ethnic Inequality (With John Huber and Radhika Gore)

This working paper examines the empirical relationship between democracy and different forms of inequality. We argue that democracy creates incentives for targeted as opposed
to general redistribution; that ethnic groups are often convenient targets for group-based distribution; and thus that democracy should reduce inequality between ethnic groups, but with little effect on overall inequality. Using a new data set from 75 countries, we find support for this argument: there is a strong and robust relationship between democracy and between-group inequality, but no such relationship exists between democracy and (a) overall inequality, (b) within-group inequality or (c) polarization. Two-stage least squares analysis with a new instrument for democracy (one based on regional democracy scores at the time of regime inception), along with an analysis of lagged democracy's effect on between-group inequality, indicates that democracy likely causes lower BGI. The analysis therefore underlines the attractiveness for parties in competitive democracies of group-based distributive politics as opposed to general ’rich-to-poor’ transfers that raise the well-being of all low income individuals.

**Tracing Policymaking Through Space and Time (with Quinn Mulroy)**

A co-authored project in the first stages of development (with Quinn Mulroy at Syracuse University) explores how we might understand and characterize the 'stickiness' of policymaking across space and time. Considerable attention is made to the continuity and self-reinforcing effects of policies, but we suggest that such approaches fail to fully account for the change that we observe in policymaking and policy expertise and knowledge. This project, however, asks how and why deeply entrenched approaches to policymaking and policy knowledge are overturned and displaced by new policy ideas and how these shifts in the evolution of policy ideas translate and spread to other contexts.

Taking the United States and South Africa as case studies, we examine continuity and change in housing and planning policymaking from a comparative context. With special attention to two comparative case studies within each country (New York and Los Angeles, and Johannesburg and Cape Town), we investigate the political origins of city planning as they took place nearly simultaneously in each country, track changes in the role of national
Research Agenda, Thomas Ogorzalek

government in supporting a particular vision of the "good city," and search for international intellectual linkages that reveal the source of similarities in urban vision at the elite level in each country. Tracing the evolution of US and South African urban development planning from 1) no dominant policy to 2) consolidating consensus on Modernist separation and large-scale publicly financed community reconstruction from the 1910s to the 1940s, to 3) New Urbanist consensus advocating public-private hybrid finance and the integration of use and class groups from the late 1980s to the present, we will employ network analysis to trace shifts in urban housing policy knowledge in academic journals, correspondence, and travel and education patterns of policymakers, producing a pair of comparative urban histories linked by an intellectual history of planning itself. This analysis will contribute to understandings of the American state and its approach to race (and class) over time, and will also provide evidence of the emergence of an international template for urban organization of residence and function that predates popular conceptions of globalization as a relatively recent phenomenon. As a larger project, this analysis can be extended to shifts in the knowledge guiding the evolution of other policy areas, especially those that involve "apolitical," "scientific" knowledge such as environmental policymaking, which have, likewise, traversed international and temporal boundaries.

Congressional Demographics, pre-1962 Congresses

This is an original data collection and assembly project, designed to create a public database of available demographic information at the congressional district level prior to 1962. David Lublin’s "Congressional District Demographic and Political Data” has several demographics at the House congressional district level from 1962-1997, but there are no electronic sources available for districts before that time. Studies of Congress often incorporate measures of constituent demography as a means of estimating one kind of extracameral influence on legislators. For historical political scientists studying the House of Representatives, this is very difficult before 1962. This project seeks to remedy this to the extent
possible, using the Census data available from the National Historic GIS project, which has
census data at the county-level for many Censuses and at the tract level for large cities
since that unit of measurement was instituted, with original GIS shapefiles drawn based
upon historic congressional atlases. Initial phases of this work is incorporated in The Cities
on the Hill, but the completion of the dataset, and inclusion of all variables for all jurisdic-
tions most accurately over all censuses, merits further attention and resources.