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Ethnic Diasporas and US Foreign Policy

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Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed a growing scholarly interest in the role that “ethnic diasporas” play in the formulation of America’s foreign policy. While the connection between these ethnic groupings and the policy process is not anything new in American political life, the systematic study of that connection is of relatively recent vintage. There are two chief reasons for this. First, changes in American demography since the 1970s have led to a fascination with issues related to “multiculturalism” and ethnic “identity”—in the context not only of domestic public policy, but also of foreign policy. In the case of the latter, an outpouring of articles and books has appeared dedicated to the phenomenon of ethnic “lobbying,” construed widely enough so as to include discussions of the “ethnic vote.” In addition, changes in the external environment set in motion by the ending of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union have put a premium upon such new relatively new categories of analysis as “ethnic conflict” and diasporas. Widespread stories about its “decline” to the contrary notwithstanding, America remains the most powerful state in the international system; thus, it offers ethnic diasporas the promise of exerting outsized influence should they be able to make their preferences become Washington’s preferences. This article surveys leading bibliographical sources pertaining to these various themes, embracing as well the normative debates they have engendered. Also included in this article are a set of references to a trio of very significant historical cases of ethnic “politicking” in US foreign policy, for, although the systematized study of the phenomenon may be fairly recent, the phenomenon is nearly as old as American foreign policy itself. Accordingly, three “classical cases” will be discussed: the Irish Americans, the German Americans, and the Anglo-Americans. Finally, the article surveys recent writings on contemporary cases in which ethnic diasporic activism has been said to have influenced the shaping of American foreign policy toward one region in particular (the “greater” Middle East) as well as toward regional dilemmas elsewhere (including Europe, Africa, and Latin America).

General Overviews

Many specialized studies have been undertaken into ethnicity’s impact upon US foreign policy. Some were published as long ago as the late 19th century, a time when attention focused most frequently on either the Irish Americans or the German Americans, the two largest non-English groups to have become established in the United States through immigration at that time. But attempts to move beyond the idiographic, single-case approach began to be made in earnest only in the decades after the Second World War, with [Gerson 1964](#) considered to be a pioneering effort in explicitly linking ethnic diasporas with overall foreign policy orientations. An important article predating [Gerson](#)

1964 and also seeking generalizable policy insight is [Fuchs 1959](#). Developments in the Mediterranean during the 1970s stimulated the author of [Halley 1985](#) to reflect upon the impact of diasporic lobbying on America's national interest. This can be interpreted alongside the theory in [Milner and Tingley 2015](#) about how presidents respond to interest groups' reactions to various foreign policymaking options. The theme of diasporic lobbying is developed further in [DeConde 1992](#), in a work that has become a standard reference on the topic. Within less than a decade, two other books joined [DeConde 1992](#) as essential reading: [Smith 2000](#) and [Shain 1999](#), whose arguments are implied or made explicit in many sources throughout this article. [Paul and Paul 2009](#) contributes valuable data and insights into the mooted influence of ethnic diasporas on policymaking. [Trautsch 2018](#) presents the more conventional argument that international relations can explain foreign policymaking, and that in the late 19th century—when the largest diasporas in America were English Americans, Irish Americans, and German Americans—foreign policymaking was directed by the need to forge an American national consciousness apart from Britain and France.

- **DeConde, Alexander. *Ethnicity, Race, and American Foreign Policy: A History*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992.**

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An oft-cited summary of the impact of ethnicity upon the scholarship on American foreign policy from the perspective of a diplomatic historian whose thesis is that fellow historians need to move beyond traditional approaches favoring either economic variables or state-level attributes associated with “power” and bring “culture” (meaning, in this case, ethnicity) into their analyses. Especially notable for treating English-descended Americans as an ethnic group in their own right.

Find this resource:

- **Fuchs, Lawrence H. “Minority Groups and Foreign Policy.” *Political Science Quarterly* 74.2 (1959): 161–175.**

DOI: [10.2307/2146629](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

One of the first articles to draw attention in the post–Second World War era to the surprising scholarly neglect of ethnicity's impact upon foreign policy in a multiethnic country such as the United States. Noteworthy for arguing that ethnic group interests have served as a vehicle for reinserting Congress into a foreign policymaking process hitherto thought to be the near-exclusive preserve of the executive branch.

Find this resource:

- **Gerson, Louis L. *The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1964.**

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An intensive focus upon the impact of European-origin ethnic diasporas in the United States, and their efforts to influence American policy in a direction favorable to the interests of their ancestral homeland, primarily through threats to mobilize the “ethnic vote” in national elections both during and following the First World War.

Find this resource:

- **Halley, Laurence. *Ancient Affections, Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy*. New York: Praeger, 1985.**

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Stimulated by the response of Greek Americans to the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, the author goes on to discuss how various administrations had dealt with the problem of trying to get “hyphenated” Americans to sublimate what Woodrow Wilson once called their “ancient affections” toward their kin countries.

Find this resource:

- **Kertzer, Joshua D., and Thomas Zeitzoff. “A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion about Foreign Policy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 61.3 (2017): 543–558.**

DOI: [10.1111/ajps.12314](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues for a more positive assessment of public opinion in foreign policymaking, as opposed to the conventional IR assessments that public opinion is driven by elite cues, and pessimism toward it as a factor in foreign policymaking. Rather, while the public lacks information elites have, they are heavily influenced by their social networks and their own ideas of what role the United States has in the world. Theories of public opinion on foreign policy that are based on elite cues overlook these influences.

Find this resource:

- **Milner, Helen V., and Dustin H. Tingley. *Sailing the Water's Edge: The Domestic Politics of American Foreign Policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.**

DOI: [10.1515/9781400873821](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Examines how domestic politics restricts presidents in foreign policymaking, specifically in the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. The authors argue that foreign policymaking processes in the United States encourage presidents to favor military options rather than “softer” tools such as trade, economic aid, immigration, and domestic military spending, which are more likely to provoke pushback and conflict from the public and interest groups such as ethnic lobbies, even if these softer tools would be more effective.

Find this resource:

- **Paul, David M., and Rachel Anderson Paul. *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2009.**

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A study that distances itself from the assumptions in both [Smith 2000](#) and [Shain 1999](#)—assumptions of the influence of ethnic diasporas, with the caveat that there are some exceptions to the rule, and singles out among these exceptions the Israeli and Cuban-American lobbies. In general, though, it is governmental elites and not ethnic lobbyists who shape the country’s foreign policy.

Find this resource:

- **Shain, Yossi. *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the US and Their Homelands*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999.**

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Often juxtaposed with [Smith 2000](#) as the alternative perspective on the implications of ethnic diasporas for the national interest. Challenges the notion that the post–Cold War period witnessed too much influence on the part of diasporas, claiming, instead, that the latter can and do promote the national interest.

Find this resource:

- **Smith, Tony. *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.**

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An essential source for current debates. The argument is that the ending of the Cold War and the loss of a threat from a rival great power unsettled US foreign policy, opening the door to growing interest group (especially ethnic interest group) participation in policymaking. The implications of this are not altogether positive for America’s “national interest” or for the long-term sustainability of its pluralist political ethos.

Find this resource:

- **Trautsch, Jasper M. *The Genesis of America : US Foreign Policy and the Formation of National Identity, 1793–1815*. Cambridge Studies in US Foreign Relations. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018.**

DOI: [10.1017/9781108635301](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A foreign policy–based argument to explain how Americans developed a national identity from the time of the French Revolution to after the Revolutionary War, despite lacking a unique culture of their own and basing their claim for independence on universal rights. Foreign policymakers provoked crises and wars with Britain and France, creating external threats and thus allowing for a national consciousness to emerge. Foreign policy is thus the product of international relations rather than domestic issues, and is a vital component of national identity.

Find this resource:

Anthologies

Following the reform of American immigration policy in 1965, the country once more became a destination for foreigners seeking a new life, as it had been for so many years before it adopted immigration restriction in the 1920s. Increasingly, though, the sources of immigration differed from the traditional places. The earlier pattern featuring heavy demographic flows from Europe to the United States ([O’Grady 1967](#)) was replaced by a new one, which saw migrants arriving in growing numbers from such nontraditional sources as Asia, Latin America, and, to an extent,

Africa. The authors of [Bayor 2016](#) examine this diversified immigration and the very creation of immigrant groups' ethnic racial identity once in America. Scholarship reflected this new demographic reality, with many analysts turning their attention to the foreign policy implications of immigration in an America—and a world—characterized by growing ethnic consciousness and increasingly mobilized ethnic diasporas ([Said 1977](#), [Stack 1981](#), [Bayor 2016](#)). The implications of ethnic lobbies, ideas, public opinion, and other factors on American foreign policy during and after the Cold War specifically are explored in [Johns and Lerner 2018](#). By their very nature, the anthologies listed are much more eclectic than the specialized monographs and articles, yet certain themes are detectable within them, including, most especially, the claim that a more “multicultural” America would be facing more complex policy challenges, both on a global and on a regional basis, than it had confronted prior to the 1970s ([Tucker, et al. 1990](#); [Wilson 2004](#); [Johns and Lerner 2018](#); [Thurber, et al. 2018](#)). Along with the challenges, opportunities also arose, and not just for Washington, but also for certain ethnic diasporas said to be skilled at seeking and achieving influence over the policy process. More and more, attention would be lavished upon those diasporas, and a new term, the “ethnic lobby,” would be frequently utilized ([Ambrosio 2002](#)). [DeWind and Segura 2014](#) makes clear that the relationship between ethnic diasporas and foreign policymakers is not predictable or straightforward, but complicated by internal divisions and diverse interests within each. Also, government legislators can harness ethnic lobbies' mobilization potential for their own benefit. The theme is further developed in [Thurber, et al. 2018](#), which explores the implications of ethnic lobbying toward Congress that diverges from the interests of the “homeland.”

- **Ambrosio, Thomas, ed. *Ethnic Identity Groups and US Foreign Policy*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002.**

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A collection of mostly contemporary case studies of the impact of ethnicity (and ethnic diasporas) on US foreign policymaking, concluding with a chapter by the editor assessing the debate carried on between the authors of [Smith 2000](#) and [Shain 1999](#) (both cited under [General Overviews](#)) and in which the author aligns more closely with the argument made in the latter work than the former. This volume, like [Wilson 2004](#), could be used in undergraduate courses.

Find this resource:

- **Bayor, Ronald H., ed. *The Oxford Handbook of American Immigration and Ethnicity*. Oxford Handbooks. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.**

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This collection of almost thirty essays covers the impact of immigration on the United States and the impact of the United States on immigrants collectively, with a focus on historical perspectives of integration and assimilation, and the creation of ethnic, immigrant, and racial groups in the United States. The most relevant chapters are about European, Asian, and Latino immigration, “African American Migration from the Colonial Era to the Present,” and “Allegiance, Dual-Citizenship, and the Ethnic Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy.” Suitable for graduate students and more advanced researchers.

Find this resource:

- **DeWind, Josh, and Renata Segura, eds. *Diaspora Lobbies and the US Government: Convergence and Divergence in Making Foreign Policy*. New York: New York University Press, 2014.**

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Assumes that diasporas can affect foreign policymaking, but also that government legislators can harness diasporas' mobilization potential for their own ends. Concerned with the potential tension between the goals of diasporas and those of the United States, or “the convergence and divergence” between these forces in foreign policymaking. Where a conflict exists it is often complicated by internal divisions within each—best demonstrated here in American Iraqis and Jews. Other chapters on Palestinian, Cuban, Ethiopian, Iraqi, and Haitian diasporas, and their foreign policy goals as well as those of policymakers.

Find this resource:

- **Johns, Andrew L., and Mitchell B. Lerner, eds. *The Cold War at Home and Abroad : Domestic Politics and US Foreign Policy since 1945*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018.**

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Emphasizes the impact of nonelites, ideas, identity, public opinion, and the media on foreign policymaking since 1945, even if cultural and social influences in general are less impactful than Congress and government officials. Examines lobbies in general and those concerned with Vietnam, Soviet refuseniks, Israel, Cuba, and other states; and the impact of increased concern for human rights globally, the end of the Cold War, and a marked increase in nonstate organizations since the 1970s, many acting as ethnic lobbies.

Find this resource:

- O'Grady, Joseph P., ed. *The Immigrants' Influence on Wilson's Peace Policies*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1967.

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A collection of essays covering the diasporas in the United States from virtually all of the European belligerents in the era of the First World War (with the notable omission of the French), tending toward the general conclusion that Woodrow Wilson's policies toward the European conflict had to be crafted always with regard for their potential impact on national unity at home.

Find this resource:

- Said, Abdul Aziz, ed. *Ethnicity and US Foreign Policy*. New York: Praeger, 1977.

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Foreshadowing recent debates over the normative meaning of ethnic involvement in foreign policymaking, this collection combines general themes with a fairly specific set of diasporic groups held to encapsulate the "new ethnicity" that began to characterize American demography in the decade following the immigration reform of 1965.

Find this resource:

- Stack, John F., Jr., ed. *Ethnic Identities in a Transnational World*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1981.

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Broadens the analysis with a collection of articles that includes, but is not limited to, the study of ethnicity as it affects American policymaking and that deals with how ethnicity structures international relations in a more "transnational" setting. All signs point to a more complex policymaking environment in Washington, as elsewhere.

Find this resource:

- Thurber, James A., Colton C. Campbell, and David A. Dulio, eds. *Congress and Diaspora Politics: The Influence of Ethnic and Foreign Lobbying*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018.

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Examines how diaspora lobbying on behalf of foreign governments differs from most domestic lobbying efforts, and the conflicts ethnic group lobbying on Congress may pose to US national interests. Also examines the growing phenomenon of foreign governments relying on hired lobbyists rather than their diplomatic corps, and instances when the interests of diasporas conflict with those of their "homeland" governments. Case studies on lobbying by Americans of Mexican, Cuban, Jewish, and Vietnamese descent, "pro-Arab lobbying," and Armenian and Turkish lobbying on the Armenian genocide.

Find this resource:

- Tucker, Robert W., Charles B. Keely, and Linda Wrigley, eds. *Immigration and US Foreign Policy*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1990.

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One of the first collections to draw attention to the likelihood that the changing composition of America's immigration intake would result in changes in the way US foreign policy would get formulated. The collection includes chapters that provide useful historical context within which to assess the new environment.

Find this resource:

- Wilson, Ernest J., III, ed. *Diversity and US Foreign Policy: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

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A compendium of previously published articles, many but not of all which deal with the topic of ethnic diversity and its varied implications for foreign policymaking. This volume is well suited for undergraduate courses.

Find this resource:

Normative Debates

Scholarship on the topic of ethnic diasporas and US foreign policy has concentrated, either explicitly or implicitly, on two sorts of questions. The first questions are normative in nature, and they are directed at the implications for America's foreign policy effectiveness if it be maintained (as most of the normative debate takes for granted) that ethnic diasporas are exerting a great deal of influence on shaping the policy. Importantly, a subsidiary set of questions leads to a consideration of the national interest and how this might be traduced (occasionally buttressed) by ethnic interest groups ([Mathias 1981](#), [Shain 1994–1995](#), [Huntington 1997](#), [Huntington 2004](#), [McConnell 2009](#)). Most dramatically, a series of inquiries arise that are not limited to foreign policy but go to the very heart of America's domestic political values and institutions—or, if one prefers, its “ontological security.” As such, their thrust is not only, or even mainly, upon the mooted diasporic impact upon American foreign policy, but rather its significance for America's very future, with attention being paid, in particular, to one specific diaspora, namely that of the American Hispanic community, above all the Mexican Americans ([Schlesinger 1993](#), [Hall and Lindholm 1999](#), [Valladão 1996](#), [Buchanan 2006](#)). An optimistic assessment of American power in the world, [Valladão 1996](#) is muted a decade later in [Valladão 2006](#), where the focus is on the globalization processes and international norms and institutions that, in an ironic twist, restrict American foreign policymaking despite the strength of this “hegemon.” The second sort of interrogation, though not without normative content, is more empirically focused and is primarily directed at (a) efforts to understand why ethnic diasporas have emerged as such relevant topics, and (b) attempts to grapple with the always difficult chore of demonstrating diasporic “influence” over foreign policy. These interrogations are covered in the two sections that immediately follow this one ([Structure and Context](#) and [Sources of Influence](#)).

- **Buchanan, Patrick J. *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America*. New York: Thomas Dunne/St. Martin's, 2006.**

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It would be hard to find a book that differs more profoundly from [Valladão 1996](#) than this one, written by a leading critic of multiculturalism from the community of policy activism, who foresees unchecked immigration from south of the Rio Grande as posing an existential threat to the American identity, and possibly also to the country's territorial integrity with the Southwest at risk of turning into a “giant Kosovo.”

Find this resource:

- **Hall, John A., and Charles Lindholm. *Is America Breaking Apart?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.**

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A direct rebuttal of the argument made in [Schlesinger 1993](#), minimizing the likelihood of ethnic divisions triumphing over the potential of the American creed (or national ideology) to promote accommodation. Although mainly concerned with domestic policy, the book's claim that American pluralism is alive and well leads to the assumption that, in foreign policy, the national interest will prevail over parochial interests.

Find this resource:

- **Huntington, Samuel P. “The Erosion of American National Interests.” *Foreign Affairs* 76.5 (1997): 28–49.**

DOI: [10.2307/20048198](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The end of the Cold War also marked the end of any great strategic project capable of stimulating unity and generating a renewed foreign policy consensus. As a result, the prospects dimmed for the development of foreign policy in tune with the national interest and parochial interests—both commercial and ethnic—will increasingly call the shots in policymaking.

Find this resource:

- **Huntington, Samuel P. *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.**

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A realist who agrees with the constructivists that “[w]e have to know who we are before we can know what our interests are” (p. 10). Unlike [Ruggie 1997](#) (cited under [Immigration and Multiculturalism](#)), Huntington's message is a worried one: The cultural foundation of American “civic” (i.e., “inorganic”) nationalism is threatened by the swelling of America's Hispanic population. A “unipolar” US foreign policy would become a plaything for ethnic diasporas.

Find this resource:

- **Mathias, Charles McCurdy, Jr. “Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy.” *Foreign Affairs* 59.5 (1981): 975–998.**

DOI: [10.2307/20040899](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

This former Republican senator from Maryland worries that ethnic interest groups harm the national interest due in no small measure to the excessive influence they exert thanks to the pandering of American politicians eager to attract funding and votes. As a result, “as Washington and Madison feared, factions among us lead the nation toward excessive foreign attachments or animosities” (p. 980)—to the detriment of the country’s overall foreign policy and its best interests.

Find this resource:

- **McConnell, Scott.** “Not So Huddled Masses: Multiculturalism and Foreign Policy.” *World Affairs* 171.4 (2009): 39–50.

DOI: [10.3200/WAFS.171.4.39-50](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

America’s ever-more multiculturalist society will yield foreign policy implications similar to those of a century ago, making it less likely that an interventionist, or “messianic,” policy can be followed. A more multicultural America will, therefore, be a more isolationist America and not—as Shain ([Shain 1994–1995](#)) and others have claimed—a more “internationalist” one.

Find this resource:

- **Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr.** *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*. Rev. ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1993.

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Similar to [Huntington 1997](#), but with a broader ambit extending past the country’s foreign policy and going to its very future as a united political entity, this is a very somber assessment of what lies in store for an increasingly multicultural America that grows more out of touch with its national “creed.”

Find this resource:

- **Shain, Yossi.** “Ethnic Diasporas and US Foreign Policy.” *Political Science Quarterly* 109.5 (1994–1995): 811–842.

DOI: [10.2307/2152533](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Contrary to [Mathias 1981](#), this article asserts that ethnic politicking strengthens the national interest as it allows America to tap the energies of its various diasporic constituencies on behalf of the promotion of core values.

Find this resource:

- **Valladão, Alfredo G. A.** *The Twenty-First Century Will Be American*. Translated by John Howe. London: Verso, 1996.

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The French original edition stirred controversy by explaining why America was not going to decline in the coming century. Instead, and ironically, it would be the development that American nationalists saw as undermining American security and identity—the country’s expanding Latin American diaspora—that would guarantee America’s ongoing centrality in a world where Latin American nations attained greater political and economic importance.

Find this resource:

- **Valladão, Alfredo G. A.** “Democratic Hegemony and American Hegemony.” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19.2 (2006): 243–260.

DOI: [10.1080/09557570600723712](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

The “American democratic empire” has engendered profound changes in world affairs that endanger its own hegemony. From above, it is compelled to defend the globalization process that has produced international regulations and norms. From below, diasporas, multinational companies, cities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and criminal organizations increasingly impact political decision making, including foreign policymaking. Note “the growing leverage of diasporas” whose interests may conflict with the national interest. The United States is thus restricted from pursuing a totally deliberate foreign policy, and it is “condemned” to continue defending this process that makes it dependent on other states and nonstate actors.

Find this resource:

Structure and Context

Interest in diasporas and their mooted influence upon US foreign policy has been stimulated by developments both intrinsic and extrinsic to the American experience. Two domestic sources of diasporic influence stand out as being so important as to form the starting point for any scholarly research into the issue. These sources are (1) America’s history as a country receiving immigrants, and (2) its experience with the formulation and reformulation of the

“national identity” in keeping with demographic trends. Two important conceptual and analytical clusters can be noted among the external factors contributing to the scholarship on diasporas in US foreign policy, namely relating to (1) ethnic conflict, especially after the ending of the Cold War, and (2) the growing interest in the impact of diasporas upon international security writ large.

Immigration and Multiculturalism

From its inception as an outpost of European settlement in the 17th century until the early decades of the 20th century, America had been a “country of immigration” ([Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999](#), [Fleegler 2013](#)). With the major exception being the involuntary migrants brought from Africa as slaves ([Heywood, et al. 2015](#)), almost everyone coming to America arrived from Europe. Until the end of the 1880s, the majority of immigrants came from countries in northwestern Europe; this era would come to be labeled as that of the “old immigration,” and, while not totally free of nativist backlash ([Higham 2011](#), [Fleegler 2013](#)). The period was characterized by an open-door approach to European immigration. The belief was widespread that, as a rising power with resources and space to accommodate a much larger population, America needed, and could easily adjust to, the migratory influx. Not until the 20th century would immigration become controversial enough to cause a fundamental revision of this liberal approach. Foreign policy developments were partly responsible for this revision, with the European bloodletting of 1914–1918 seen by many as presenting serious challenges to domestic harmony. Also, however, changing attitudes toward ethnicity and “race” fed a growing apprehension about the “new immigration” from southern and eastern regions of Europe after the 1880s, specifically the fear that people from these regions were incapable of assimilating into American society. As a result, by the 1920s a new attitude toward immigration set in and, until the revisions of 1965, policy generally was restrictive. [Fleegler 2013](#) examines the shift in the American public’s perception of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, specifically its eventual appreciation of these immigrants’ unique “contributions” to American society. Since 1965, the United States has again become a significant immigrant-receiving country, albeit of influxes from non-European countries ([Moon 2012](#)). As a result, renewed and intensified debates have occurred about the meaning of immigration for America’s identity and its public policies, including its foreign policy ([Lacorne 1997](#)). This development has contributed to a revival of interest in the role played by ethnic diasporas and African Americans in shaping US foreign policy—an interest facilitated by the rise of “social-constructivist” scholarship stressing the close bond between the “national interest” and the “national identity” ([Ruggie 1997](#); [Heywood, et al. 2015](#)). Henceforth, identity would become a frequent point of reference for those debating the country’s foreign policy ([Lacorne 1997](#), [Chadova-Devlen 2014](#), as well as sources in [Normative Debates](#)). These debates have pivoted around the issue of America’s mooted “multiculturalist” identity and what that identity implies for the future ([Brimelow 1995](#), [Portes and Rumbaut 2006](#)). Specifically, [Chadova-Devlen 2014](#) examines the hybrid identity of Russian Americans, [Moon 2012](#) explains the largely unsuccessful lobbying efforts of Korean Americans, and [Heywood, et al. 2015](#) offers a detailed treatment of African Americans’ imprint on American foreign policy via government positions and civil society institutions.

- **Brimelow, Peter. *Alien Nation: Common Sense about America's Immigration Disaster*. New York: Random House, 1995.**

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One of the seminal contributions, from the restrictionist side, to the debate about the implications of the new “new” immigration that was triggered by the 1965 liberalization and that reached full flood by the 1990s. Argues that contemporary immigration not only fails to economically benefit the United States, but it also challenges the very meaning of Americanism.

Find this resource:

- **Chadova-Devlen, Elena. “Whose Interests? US-Russian Foreign Policy Controversies in Russian American Ethnic Press.” *International Studies Perspectives* 15.1 (2014): 36–53.**

DOI: [10.1111/insp.12011](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Examines how Russian newspapers in the United States covered Russia-US controversies between 1999 and 2007, with the purpose of assessing how political identity and loyalties are negotiated in conflict situations. Found a hybrid identity, influenced by security concerns: The press mostly de-emphasized conflict, but it was more pro-American when US security was perceived to be at risk. Studying Russian Americans is a corrective to selection bias in related research: most focus on groups that engage in active lobbying. Also, the rare research on this diaspora, despite abundant studies of US–Russia relations, looks at the political function of *elite* media mainly.

Find this resource:

- **Dinnerstein, Leonard, and David M. Reimers. *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration*. 4th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.**

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Tells the story of immigration into America from the colonial period to the end of the 20th century. An indispensable source for understanding the shift from the years when immigration largely derived from European lands to the post-1965 period, when immigrants began to arrive in growing numbers from Latin America and Asia.

Find this resource:

- **Fleegler, Robert L. *Ellis Island Nation: Immigration Policy and American Identity in the Twentieth Century*. Haney Foundation Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.**

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Depicts the evolution of immigration debates between the First world War and the 1960s, specifically the different perceptions of earlier immigration waves versus newer immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. The analytical tool is “contributionism,” the belief that newer immigrants brought unique benefits to American society. Traces the gradual acceptance of contributionism in congressional debates throughout watershed events in 1924, the Second World War, and the Cold War, culminating in rejection of the national origins quotas in 1965. However, contributionism excluded Asians, Latinos, African Americans, and Fleegler questions whether the contributions of Latino immigrants today will also be appreciated fully.

Find this resource:

- **Heywood, Linda, Allison Blakely, Charles Stith, and Joshua C. Yesnowitz. *African Americans in U.S. Foreign Policy: From the Era of Frederick Douglass to the Age of Obama*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015.**

DOI: [10.5406/illinois/9780252038877.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.5406/illinois/9780252038877.001.0001) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Fascinating link between US race relations and foreign policy. Traces impactful African Americans in various presidential administrations, particularly in the State Department and as UN representatives and ambassadors posted in Africa. The impact of African Americans has been through civil society institutions, for instance as Baptist missionaries in Africa, but also encouraged by the State Department to engage in soft diplomacy in Europe, such as in athletic delegations and even as jazz musicians, with the intended effect to depict racial harmony in the United States and to serve its Cold War agenda.

Find this resource:

- **Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Originally published in 1955. Concentrates on the sixty-five-year period during which divisive debates about immigration were becoming an ever-more noticeable feature of domestic politics, with a mounting “nativist” critique developing against the backdrop of a relentless rise in the volume of immigration, nearly all of it from parts of Europe that had not traditionally sent emigrants to the United States.

Find this resource:

- **Huntington, Samuel P. *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A realist who agrees with the constructivists that “[w]e have to know who we are before we can know what our interests are” (p. 10). Unlike [Ruggie 1997](#), Huntington’s message is a worried one: The cultural foundation of American “civic” (i.e., “inorganic”) nationalism is threatened by the swelling of America’s Hispanic population. A “unipolar” US foreign policy would become a plaything for ethnic diasporas.

Find this resource:

- **Lacorne, Denis. *La crise de l’identité américaine: Du melting-pot au multiculturalisme*. Paris: Fayard, 1997.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

An insightful French perspective on America’s so-called identity crisis, associated with the new emphasis upon multiculturalism. France itself struggles with the meaning of multiculturalism with respect to the future of the national polity, and often the concept is linked to debates about the meaning of America for France. The author’s perspective

is an optimistic one, at least for the United States, whose identity may be said to be in transformation but not really in crisis.

Find this resource:

- Moon, Katharine H. S. "Ethnicity and U.S. Foreign Policy: Korean Americans." *Asia Policy* 13 (2012): 19–38.

DOI: [10.1353/asp.2012.0007](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The general failure of Korean Americans to influence US policy toward Korea is due to a lack of cohesion demographically and institutionally; overarching policy objectives that also align with US interests, organizational capacity, and lobbying networks in Congress. This is compounded by historic suspicions of Asian Americans' "dual loyalty." Comparison made to Armenian Americans' effective lobbying despite internal differences and a small population ([Saideman 2002](#), [Rubenzer 2008](#), both cited under [Ethnic Lobbying](#)). Koreans' lobbying is more effective when it emphasizes "universalist framing," such as focusing on North Korean human rights, rather than "ethnic" issues such as Korean reunification.

Find this resource:

- Portes, Alejandro, and Rubén G. Rumbaut. *Immigrant America: A Portrait*. 3d ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Assesses the latest immigration wave to hit the United States and argues that, notwithstanding the need for some policy adjustments, there is absolutely no reason to expect, contrary to the claim made in [Brimelow 1995](#), that this cohort of immigrants will prove to be any less successful than earlier ones in adjusting to American society and contributing to the overall economy.

Find this resource:

- Ruggie, John Gerard. "The Past as Prologue? Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy." *International Security* 21.4 (1997): 89–125.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A seminal contribution to the 1990s debate about the impact of the disappearance of the Soviet threat upon the ability of America to comprehend and defend its national interest. The claim is made that in the new, "threatless" era, one might expect the country's ideological identity (its "inorganic nationalism") to provide guidance with respect to foreign policymaking.

Find this resource:

Ethnic Conflict and Diasporas

The second source behind the most recent rekindling of interest in the relationship between ethnic diasporas and US foreign policy comes from changes in the external environment stemming from the ending of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet empire, and, indeed, of the Soviet Union itself ([Weiner 1993](#)). The post-Soviet era ushered in, as a major concern for scholars of international security, the phenomenon of "ethnic conflict" ([Saideman 2001](#)), although skeptics remain who considered the concept to be neither novel nor helpful. This value of this concept in scholarship on political conflict is covered in [Saideman 2001](#), [Gilley 2004](#), [Moore 2002](#), and [Moore 2017](#). One side effect of the attention accorded to ethnic conflict has been a questioning as to whether mobilized diasporas are becoming increasingly effective actors in international security and, if so, whether this was a good or a bad development. A subject that had attracted the attention of relatively few scholars up until the latter stages of the Cold War, diasporas suddenly emerged as a "hot-button" topic. The analytical value of *this* concept, and concern for its increasing capaciousness, is discussed in [Brubaker 2005](#) and [Brubaker 2017](#). Importantly for our purposes in this article, with the United States said to be a "unipolar" power after 1991, it stood to reason that the stakes of lobbying efforts by ethnic groups were going to be greater in the American context than in that of any other nation, for what better way to advance the interests of the kin country than to seek and obtain favorable policy decisions in Washington ([Shain and Barth 2003](#), [Smith and Stares 2007](#), [Koinova 2018](#))? So a powerful injection of external pressure was added to the internally generated interest in diasporas, as a result of US immigration trends. The question remained: were the diasporas the tail that was wagging the dog of US foreign policy or were they merely being exploited by state elites interested in promoting a comprehensive strategic agenda that was quite in tune with the national interest ([Moore 2002](#))? To answer that question, one must inquire into exactly how "influence" might be measured. This is explored in the section immediately following ([Sources of Influence](#)). [Koinova 2018](#) furthers the inquiry into the influence of foreign states on American politics and policies, but *through* their diasporas in the United States.

- **Brubaker, Rogers. "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28.1 (2005): 1–19.**

DOI: [10.1080/0141987042000289997](https://doi.org/10.1080/0141987042000289997) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Similar to [Gilley 2004](#), urges caution regarding the use of concepts and claims that the concept of "diaspora" is becoming so stretched as to risk loss of utility for scholarly analysis. Argues the concept entails three key characteristics: (1) geographic dispersion, (2) a homeland orientation, and (3) strict boundary maintenance between itself and the society of the host country (i.e., resistance to complete assimilation).

Find this resource:

- **Brubaker, Rogers. "Revisiting "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40.9 (2017): 1556–1561.**

DOI: [10.1080/01419870.2017.1308533](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1308533) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Largely confirms [Brubaker 2005](#) in light of further proliferation of the term *diaspora* and a vast increase in research that takes *diaspora* to mean "bona fide actual entities" with quantifiable memberships, but which strays from the core elements of the term. Claims that diasporas should be thought of not as strictly bounded entities, but rather a stance, a claim, a "category of practice . . . used to make claims, to articulate projects, . . . to mobilize energies, [and] to appeal to loyalties" (p. 1559).

Find this resource:

- **Gilley, Bruce. "Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 25.6 (2004): 1155–1166.**

DOI: [10.1080/0143659042000256959](https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659042000256959) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The author expresses doubts about the utility of the category of ethnic politics and bluntly suggests that the concept of "ethnic conflict" should be dropped from scholarly discourse. At best it is "merely a holding pen for a herd of disparate descriptive events" (p. 1160). Besides, no evidence suggests that so-called ethnic conflicts are becoming either more numerous or more troublesome for international security.

Find this resource:

- **Koinova, Maria. "Diaspora Mobilisation for Conflict and Post-conflict Reconstruction: Contextual and Comparative Dimensions," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44.8 (2018): 1251–1269.**

DOI: [10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354152](https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354152) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Introduces a special volume representing a research agenda that (1) transcends the dichotomy of diasporas as either "peace-makers" or "peace-wreckers" in contested or weak states, (2) and that theorizes spatial and temporal contexts, such as diasporas' geo-spatial links to particular places (cities, regions, Internet forums) not limited to their "homeland" or "host land." Each article examines at least two diasporas in the United States, Canada, and Europe, mobilizing with regard to conflict or post-conflict situations elsewhere in the world.

Find this resource:

- **Moore, Will H. "Ethnic Minorities and Foreign Policy." *SAIS Review* 22.2 (2002): 77–91.**

DOI: [10.1353/sais.2002.0043](https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2002.0043) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Approaches the linkage between diasporas and ethnic conflict with caution, arguing that, while it is obvious that the former can have an impact upon the latter, one should not exaggerate the significance of that impact. Neither is there evidence to substantiate the claim that ethnic diasporas distort policymaking in democracies, the United States foremost among them.

Find this resource:

- **Moore, Will H. "What Do We Know as a Field about the Causal Determinants of Ethnic Conflict?" *Ethnopolitics* 16.1 (2017): 56–59.**

DOI: [10.1080/17449057.2016.1235349](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2016.1235349) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues that "ethnic conflict" should not be a subset of political-conflict studies, similar to [Gilley 2004](#). Parsing "conflict studies" into "ethnic conflict," "civil war," "terrorism," and others obfuscates the centrality of *coercion* in all political conflict, and runs against acceptance that ethnic identity is constructed. Instead, researchers should ask: What explains the political cleavages over which mobilization takes place? Ethnic conflicts should be studied within a more general account of mobilization.

Find this resource:

- **Saideman, Stephen M. *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy, and International Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.**

DOI: [10.7312/said12228Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Concentrates upon the foreign policies that the United States and other key actors adopt with respect to ethnic conflicts that generate secessionist pressures, with the two regions selected for case studies those of Africa in the 1960s and Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Takes “ethnic politics” to be a key explanatory variable in assessing foreign policy behavior.

Find this resource:

- **Shain, Yossi, and Aharon Barth. “Diasporas and International Relations Theory.” *International Organization* 57.3 (2003): 449–479.**

DOI: [10.1017/S0020818303573015Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Diaspora is meaningful analytically, and these groups can influence international security not only by acquiring a voice in shaping the foreign policy of America (the host country), but also by involvement in the politics of the kin country. Kin countries with a recent history of ethnic conflict that have a US-based diaspora are far more likely to experience a renewal of such conflict than are countries with a similar history but no US-based diaspora.

Find this resource:

- **Smith, Hazel, and Paul Stares, eds. *Diasporas in Conflict: Peace-Makers or Peace-Wreckers?* Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A collection of essays that addresses the above-mentioned, and often overlooked, way in which ethnic diasporas might exert an impact upon US foreign policy, namely not because of what they might do in the United States itself but rather because of their impact upon the security conditions facing the kin country (or “ancestral homeland”)—conditions that have a way of coming back to perplex American policymakers.

Find this resource:

- **Weiner, Myron, ed. *International Migration and Security*. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

This edited collection situates US policymaking in a broad comparative context, and at a moment when the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Yugoslavia were bringing to the fore numerous security challenges triggered by demographic flows and ethnic rivalries.

Find this resource:

Sources of Influence

The debate over the part played by ethnic diasporas in shaping America’s foreign policy concerns more than the normative dimension. It involves some very important questions about the American policy process itself and the tricky business of how we should comprehend the element called “influence.” In this section, the article expands upon the two major ways in which it is thought ethnic diasporas can alter the shaping of US foreign policy: (1) diasporic “lobbying” (almost always, of Congress) and (2) the mooted “ethnic vote.”

Ethnic Lobbying

The starting point for any empirical discussion of the potential impact of ethnic diasporas on US foreign policy is what might be termed the “level-of-analysis” problem. That is to say, are the foreign policies of states fundamentally shaped by the dictates of the international system (the “structural” level) or does the domestic setting have an inordinate bearing upon the choice of foreign policy objectives? [Small 1996](#) makes the case that it is the domestic arena, particularly in democratic countries such as the United States, that deserves the lion’s share of attention from scholars seeking to understand the dynamics of making foreign policy. Many who focus upon the domestic arena do so with their eye fastened especially upon Congress, held to be the most logical site for the kind of influence attempting efforts that goes under the name of “lobbying.” [Schriftgiesser 1951](#) and more recently [Small 1996](#) show what it is about the American constitutional system that renders the United States more susceptible than other liberal democracies to interest-group influence in the policy process, while [Baumgartner, et al. 2009](#) sounds a cautionary

note about imputing too much effect to lobbying. To the extent lobbying does get results, it is often because of the financial contributions interest groups (including ethnic ones) make to candidates in congressional elections; however, as [Stratmann 2005](#) shows, scholars are divided regarding the overall impact of such contributions. Indeed, [Hall and Deardorff 2006](#) suggests that, far from exerting a pernicious influence, lobbyists might contribute to better policymaking by “subsidizing” legislators, for whom they effectively act as unpaid research assistants. Since the late 2000s, an increasing amount of research has looked at how specific ethnic interest groups can, through their lobbying, affect foreign policymaking processes. [Ross 2013](#) examines Muslim interest groups, and the impact of Muslim identity specifically on their foreign policy interests, and [Sharma 2017](#) examines the growth of Indian Americans’ lobbying since the end of the Cold War. [Saideman 2002](#) and [Rubenzer 2008](#) are rare examples of theorizing the mooted sources of the influence of ethnic diasporas, with attention to diasporas’ size and unity of interests. The impact of legislators’ own ethnic background is examined in [Wilson and Ellis 2014](#), focusing on the attention given by African American legislators to foreign policy issues concerning African countries, and in [Ross 2013](#), which inquires into the causal links between the presence of Latino legislators and the substantive representation of Latino constituents.

- **Baumgartner, Frank R., Jeffrey M. Berry, Marie Hojnacki, David C. Kimball, and Beth L. Leech. *Lobbying and Policy Change: Who Wins, Who Loses, and Why*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.**

DOI: [10.7208/chicago/9780226039466.001.0001](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Cautions that one should not assume lobbies exercise undue influence when it comes to effecting policy change; at best they can bring about marginal adjustments to policies already in place, but they cannot engender wholesale reversals of the status quo. Moreover, lobbying is even less relevant in shaping foreign policy than domestic policy, largely due to the central role played by the executive branch with respect to the former.

Find this resource:

- **Hall, Richard, and Alan V. Deardorff. “Lobbying as Legislative Subsidy.” *American Political Science Review* 100.1 (2006): 69–84.**

DOI: [10.1017/S0003055406062010](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

The authors suggest a new way of approaching the relationship between interest groups and legislators, one that parts company with the two traditional approaches to the phenomenon (of seeing lobbying as representing either a purchasing of favor or a form of persuasion). Rather, the claim is that lobbyists “subsidize” the legislative process through the provision of information to their congressional allies.

Find this resource:

- **Ross, Liat Radcliffe. “Muslim Interest Groups and Foreign Policy in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom: Identity, Interests, and Action.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 9.3 (2013): 287–306.**

DOI: [10.1111/j.1743-8594.2012.00186.x](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Examines the motivation of Muslim interest groups’ foreign-policy behavior. How does Muslim *identity* influence this, as compared to structural or rationalist variables such as resources, current foreign policy, or short-term goals? The most salient aspects of Muslim identity are transnational loyalty, particularly to Muslim victims of violence; integration and participation as a minority; and religion. But, it may be less salient than other identities in certain contexts, and structural and rationalist factors can also partly explain Muslims’ foreign-policy behavior.

Find this resource:

- **Rubenzer, Trevor. “Ethnic Minority Interest Group Attributes and US Foreign Policy Influence: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4.2 (2008): 169–185.**

DOI: [10.1111/j.1743-8594.2007.00063.x](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Similar to [Saideman 2002](#), the author urges that the size of the diaspora group should be de-emphasized, and the focus placed instead upon its functioning as a successful interest group. The latter entails that US strategic interests and the preferences of the ethnic interest group should converge. Notes that “[P]olitical activity and organization are the key factors that determine the presence or absence of influence” (p. 183).

Find this resource:

- **Saideman, Stephen M. “The Power of the Small: The Impact of Ethnic Minorities on Foreign Policy.” *SAIS Review* 22.2 (2002): 93–105.**

DOI: [10.1353/sais.2002.0050](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

The thesis is that those who place emphasis upon the size of a diaspora are looking in the wrong place: the advantage may lie in smallness, as it enables the diasporic group better to focus its influence attempts. Two recent cases in point are lobbying by Greek Americans against recognition of Macedonian independence and by Armenian Americans opposed to extending aid to Azerbaijan.

Find this resource:

- **Schriftgiesser, Karl. *Lobbyists: The Art and Business of Influencing Lawmakers*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1951.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

One of the earliest works on the topic. Written by a leading political journalist of his generation, someone who, while cognizant of the constitutional protection (indeed encouragement) given to those who would petition government, nevertheless remains worried about the potential of special interest groups to pervert the workings of democracy.

Find this resource:

- **Sharma, Ashok. *Indian Lobbying and Its Influence in US Decision Making: Post-Cold War*. New Delhi: SAGE, 2017.**

DOI: [10.4135/9789353280024](https://doi.org/10.4135/9789353280024) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Profound positive changes in US-India relations in the last two decades are largely thanks to the economic success of Indian Americans and lobbyists hired by the Indian government itself. Their successes include the creation of an India Caucus in the House and Senate and the passage of the civil nuclear deal in Congress. Indian Americans are less effective in lobbying than other diasporas, however, due to their diversity of socioeconomic status, religion, and language, and their complacency, argues Sharma. Contrasts to the Cold War when their mobilization was apolitical and focused on discrimination.

Find this resource:

- **Small, Melvin. *Democracy and Diplomacy: The Impact of Domestic Politics on US Foreign Policy, 1789–1994*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The constitutional separation of powers over foreign policy, coupled with the presence of large ethnic diasporas, results in the latter having an outsized impact on the development of foreign policy. America is not be the only multiethnic democracy, but it is the “only one among them that lacks the ability to suppress the cacophony of voices from electorally powerful ethnic groups” (p. xvi).

Find this resource:

- **Stratmann, Thomas. “Some Talk: Money in Politics—A (Partial) Review of the Literature.” *Public Choice* 124 (2005): 135–156.**

DOI: [10.1007/s11127-005-4750-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-005-4750-3) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

There is a chicken-and-egg problem when it comes to assessing the impact of campaign financing provided by special interests, summed up thusly: “Do incumbents who receive money from special-interest groups cater to their wishes because they received campaign contributions, or do they receive campaign contributions because they are already committed to the interest group’s point of view?” (p. 143). On this question, the scholarly evidence is very mixed.

Find this resource:

- **Wilson, Walter Clark, and William Curtis Ellis. “Surrogates beyond Borders: Black Members of the United States Congress and the Representation of African Interests on the Congressional Foreign-Policy Agenda.” *Polity* 46.2 (2014): 255–273.**

DOI: [10.1057/pol.2014.3](https://doi.org/10.1057/pol.2014.3) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Proposes an innovative explanation of why African American members of Congress are more active on foreign policy issues concerning Africa than are non-black members of Congress. *Transnational surrogate representation*, caused by affective ties to an international black community, is what motivates policy commitments and representation toward African countries. This differs from previous theories based on domestic racial-group consciousness. *Transnational surrogate representation* seems to differ from *diasporic representation* in that it refers specifically to patterns of foreign policymaking in Congress.

Find this resource:

Ethnic Voting

The second chief way in which it is argued that ethnic diasporas make their influence felt in the American policy process is through the ballot box. Unlike the clusters of scholarly work dedicated to understanding lobbying, here the arena in which influence gets pursued is not so much Congress per se as it is the broader American electorate, which to some authors constitutes the best avenue for advancing the interests of ethnic diasporas mobilized around foreign policy issues. Thus the entry point for work examining the impact of ethnic voting upon foreign policy is the corpus of scholarship dedicated to comprehending how, or even whether, “public opinion” gets factored into decision making on matters pertaining to foreign policy. A seemingly never-ending discussion summarized in [Levering 1978](#) and [Holsti 2004](#) centers upon the degree to which leaders allow themselves to be, in effect, “led” by the dictates of the public. An important leitmotif of this debate, discussed in [Jacobs and Page 2005](#), subsumes the normative question as to whether publics actually know enough to be permitted to have their hands on the tiller of foreign policy. [Levy and Kramer 1973](#) presents a series of generalizations about the impact of ethnic voting blocs on American policy, with implications for foreign policy. Most American elections really do not turn very much on matters of foreign policy, but exceptions have occurred on occasion. [Lovell 1980](#) and [Burchell 1972](#) supply useful empirical insight into two such mooted exceptions, the elections of 1916 and 1920, respectively. [Snetsinger 1974](#), [Weisberg 2014](#), and [Segev 2014](#) pursue the same tack with reference to the Jewish vote and attempts to win it in the presidential elections of 1940, 1944, 1948, and 2012, through appeals to supporting political Zionism and Israel. [Weisberg 2014](#) and [Mazrui 1996](#) both caution that a common religion, here Judaism and Islam, does not necessarily produce a united voting or lobbying bloc, however.

- **Burchell, R. A. “Did the Irish and German Voters Desert the Democrats in 1920? A Tentative Statistical Answer.” *Journal of American Studies* 6.2 (1972): 153–164.**

DOI: [10.1017/S0021875800001286](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Second only to the 1916 election, many believe the 1920 election was one dominated by foreign affairs. It is said of this election that the “minorities” were responsible for the landslide victory of Warren G. Harding, in particular the Irish Americans and the German Americans. This article argues that the GOP victory was “overdetermined.” Irish and German voters did defect from the Democrats, but they did not do so in disproportionate numbers.

Find this resource:

- **Holsti, Ole R. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Rev. ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.**

DOI: [10.3998/mpub.6750](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Situates the same themes as [Levering 1978](#) within the theoretical debate in international relations pitting “liberals” against “realists.” The former believe the public should dictate the major contours of foreign policy, the latter argue that this would be detrimental to the national interest. For better or worse (the author is undecided) America’s ethnic diversity is increasingly leading to a greater public role in foreign policy decision making.

Find this resource:

- **Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. “Who Influences US Foreign Policy?” *American Political Science Review* 99.1 (2005): 107–123.**

DOI: [10.1017/S000305540505152X](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

Public opinion plays an insignificant part in shaping US foreign policy. Eight quadrennial pairs of surveys between 1974 and 2002, under the sponsorship of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, reveal that “the effect of public opinion on the preferences of foreign policy makers appears to be—at best—modest . . . In general, public opinion takes a back seat to business and experts” (p. 119).

Find this resource:

- **Levering, Ralph B. *The Public and American Foreign Policy, 1918–1978*. New York: William Morrow, 1978.**

[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

A balanced overview of the part played by public opinion in the shaping of US foreign policy. The scholars are divided as to whether presidents lead the public along paths they wish it to trod or whether it is the public that is doing the leading. One of the four principal indicators of policy perceptions during the period surveyed is ethnicity.

Find this resource:

- **Levy, Mark R., and Michael S. Kramer. *The Ethnic Factor: How America’s Minorities Decide Elections*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973.**

[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

America's "ethnics" (some 65 million at the time of writing) do have a major impact upon both domestic and foreign policy stemming from their electoral clout. Case studies of voting preferences of a half-dozen ethnic groups, ranging from African Americans to Italian Americans, advance the argument that ethnic Americans possess "electoral power," and that this is healthy for the functioning of American democracy.

Find this resource:

- **Lovell, S. D. *The Presidential Election of 1916*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

If a presidential election was ever dominated by foreign affairs, 1916 should have been it. Woodrow Wilson, seeking to be the first Democratic incumbent reelected since Andrew Jackson, had as his sworn foes the two largest organized ethnic communities, the German Americans and the Irish Americans. The author's analysis serves to remind us not to overstate the "electoral clout" of diasporas.

Find this resource:

- **Mazrui, Ali A. "Between the Crescent and the Star-Spangled Banner: American Muslims and US Foreign Policy." *International Affairs* 72.3 (1996): 493–506.**

DOI: [10.2307/2625553](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Muslims constitute at least as large a presence in American demography as Jews, but they are too divided along national and religious lines to enable anything like a mobilized diaspora to develop around unified foreign policy themes. Moreover, nearly half of America's Muslims are "indigenous," namely African Americans whose primary focus is upon the domestic fortunes of black America rather than on the greater Middle East.

Find this resource:

- **Segev, Zohar. "Myth and Reality, Denial and Concealment: American Zionist Leadership and the Jewish Vote in the 1940s." *Israel Affairs* 20.3 (2014): 347–369.**

DOI: [10.1080/13537121.2014.922808](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Analyzes efforts by American Zionist leaders to mobilize the Jewish vote in the 1940s, and to cover up this very courtship due to ethnic politics in America at the time. Credits these efforts with increasing political unity of Jews and encouraging them to organize on an ethnic basis for the purpose of both Jewish issues and non-Jewish issues, which came to form their worldviews as Americans. Should be read with [Snetsinger 1974](#) and the alternative thesis in [Weisberg 2014](#).

Find this resource:

- **Snetsinger, John. *Truman, the Jewish Vote, and the Creation of Israel*. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1974.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Presaging subsequent debates about the "Israel lobby" in US foreign policy, this study advances the thesis that American Jews managed to achieve significant influence over the country's foreign policy. They did this, says the author, by the power of the "ethnic vote" in the 1948 presidential campaign, mobilized as it was behind the cause of securing American backing for a Jewish state in Palestine.

Find this resource:

- **Weisberg, Herbert F. "Tradition! Tradition? Jewish Voting in the 2012 Election." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 47.3 (2014): 629–635.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A thought-provoking reexamination of Jewish voting patterns in presidential elections from 1916 to 2012. Suggests that 2012 could have marked the beginning of a long-term increase in Republican voting by Jews, despite long-held notions of Jewish Democratic identification. Looks at efforts to win Jewish votes by appealing to foreign policy issues: The Republican Jewish Council's criticism of Obama's record on Israel, a Republican-Evangelical alliance regarding Israel; and US policy in the Middle East regarding an Iranian nuclear threat.

Find this resource:

Three Classical Cases

Although, as noted in the [Introduction](#), the systematic study of ethnic diasporas and their postulated impact upon US foreign policy may be of fairly recent vintage, the actual issue has been around for a long time. If anything, the debates of a century or so ago regarding whether the country's sizeable ethnic constituencies were hijacking its foreign policy were more searing, if no less inconclusive, than those of recent decades. No study of contemporary ethnic diasporas and American foreign policy can be complete without reference to the era in which three "classical" cases figured prominently: the [Irish Americans](#), the [German Americans](#), and the [Anglo-Americans](#).

Irish Americans

To many scholars, Irish America represents the ne plus ultra of diasporic influence attempts in American history, though these scholars do remain somewhat divided as to whether the influence achieved by this lobby was more heavily felt in Ireland or in North America. Because of its demographic weight in America and its intensively held nationalism directed against Great Britain ([Kenny 2000](#), [Dolan 2008](#)), the Irish diaspora in the United States has been considered as setting the standard for assessing the impact of diaspora activism in the United States. Debate over the meaning of Irish America for the country's overall foreign policy and, in particular, the quality of its relationship with Great Britain began in earnest during the American Civil War era, with great emphasis placed on the potential of both "physical-force" activism—in today's parlance, "terrorism"—and on peaceful ("constitutional") avenues as lobbying Congress or brandishing the presumed power of the "ethnic vote" ([Jenkins 1969](#), [Neidhardt 1975](#), [Gleeson 2013](#)). Efforts outside the official channels included attempts to foster a sense of transatlantic community centered on Protestant unity and Anglo-American friendship ([Flewelling 2018](#)). [Gleeson 2013](#) adds to these discussions the emergent Irish-American ethnic identity, in the context of slavery and race relations. The high-water mark of Irish-American constitutional activism came during the period spanning the years preceding the First World War and the early postwar era, when the twin objectives of the diaspora were (1) to prevent American participation in the war against Germany, and (2) to promote the cause of Irish self-determination ([Tansill 1957](#), [Buckley 1976](#)). Women's activism at that time is the subject of [McCarthy 2014](#), focused on alliances formed between American suffragists and female Irish nationalists. From the view in Ireland, Irish Americans have had such an influence on both the United States and Ireland itself that this group has significantly impacted the very meaning of Irishness, argues [Pierse and Trew 2018](#), felt acutely "at home."

- **Buckley, John P. *The New York Irish: Their View of American Foreign Policy, 1914–1921*. New York: Arno, 1976.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Traces the ebb and flow of Irish-American efforts to influence policy over a span of years, dominated, first, by debates over America's position toward the war in Europe and, subsequently, by its role in the postwar period. Notes an important gulf between what the diaspora's leaders (i.e., the "professional Irish") sought and what the majority of Irish Americans were prepared to support.

Find this resource:

- **Dolan, Jay P. *The Irish Americans: A History*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2008.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Covers much of the same ground as [Kenny 2000](#) in tracing the demographic and political influence of this community. Gives considerable credit to Irish-American diasporic activism for having altered the status quo in both parts of Ireland (viz., in bringing into being the Free State in southern Ireland during the 1920s and making possible the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998).

Find this resource:

- **Flewelling, Lindsey. *Two Irelands beyond the Sea: Ulster Unionism and America, 1880–1920*. Reappraisals in Irish History 11. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press, 2018.**

DOI: [10.2307/j.ctt22rbjfd](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

An account of the efforts by Ireland's unionists to counter and diminish the strength of the very active Home Rule Irish nationalist movement and the Scotch Irish in America. Efforts to create a transatlantic unionist community took the form of appealing to Irish Americans on political, social, and religious grounds such as through repeated diplomatic visits to the United States and encouraging a transatlantic Ulster Scots religious revival, Protestant unity, and Anglo-American friendship.

Find this resource:

- Gleeson, David T. *The Green and the Gray : The Irish in the Confederate States of America*. Civil War America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

DOI: [10.5149/9781469607573](https://doi.org/10.5149/9781469607573) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A study of Irish Americans in the South at the time of the Civil War, examining their initially reluctant but eventually enthusiastic support of secessionism and their military enlistment. Argues that supporting the Confederacy was motivated mainly by local patriotism, reflecting their own desire for independence from Britain. Also discusses the role of the Catholic Church, and an emergent Irish-American ethnic identity that incorporated “whiteness” in the context of race relations at that time.

Find this resource:

- Jenkins, Brian A. *Fenians and Anglo-American Relations during Reconstruction*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Those within the diaspora who advocated “physical force” nationalism had a complicating role in the evolution of US relations with Great Britain during the tension fraught years following the Civil War. Moreover, domestic political realities (viz., the “Irish vote”) contributed to delaying the onset of a more cooperative relationship between the large English-speaking powers.

Find this resource:

- Kenny, Kevin. *The American Irish: A History*. New York: Longman, 2000.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A thorough treatment of the Irish diaspora in America from the 17th century to the end of the 20th century. Emphasizes the degree to which, prior to the 1830s, most American Irish were Protestants hailing largely from Ulster, and chronicles the identity shift of the earlier group of Irish, who by the mid-19th century were increasingly calling themselves by a new name, the “Scotch-Irish.”

Find this resource:

- McCarthy, Tara M. “Woman Suffrage and Irish Nationalism: Ethnic Appeals and Alliances in America.” *Women’s History Review* 23.2 (2014): 188–203.

DOI: [10.1080/09612025.2013.849143](https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2013.849143) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Irish nationalism and women’s suffrage in the United States were the entry points for Irish-American women to become politically active in America. Explores the alliances between American suffragists and American-Irish women nationalists in the 19th and 20th centuries, each beneficial to the other. Argues that some Irish Americans joined the suffragists in the United States, while American suffragists reached out to Irish-American women because of their own interest in political representation and the prominence and large populations of Irish Americans in New York and Massachusetts.

Find this resource:

- Neidhardt, Wilfried. *Fenianism in North America*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues, before a similar argument appears in [Gleeson 2013](#), that it is incorrect to assume, as many do, that the Fenians were a harmless, though eccentric lot. Claims instead, that they made a significant (though unintended) contribution to political developments in North America, first by stimulating confederation of Britain’s North American colonies and, second, by complicating Anglo-American diplomatic relations.

Find this resource:

- Pierse, Michael, and Johanne Devlin Trew, eds. *Rethinking the Irish Diaspora: After the Gathering*. Migration, Diasporas and Citizenship. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Explores the different meanings of *Irishness* and *diaspora* in the United States, Britain, and Ireland, North and South. These were made apparent by the Gathering Ireland 2013, events encouraging diaspora tourism to Ireland. Discusses the homogenization of the meaning of Irish identity, culture, religion, and ethnicity in the diaspora. Emphasizes the often contradictory meanings of Irishness in light of the 2008 recession, youth emigration, and Brexit. Chapters on the United States focus on Irish nationalism and immigrants’ embrace of white identity during the Civil War era.

Find this resource:

- Tansill, Charles Callan. *America and the Fight for Irish Freedom, 1866–1922: An Old Story Based upon New Data*. New York: Devin-Adair, 1957.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Detailed analysis of the fissures within the Irish-American activist community from the days of the Fenians to the struggle against ratification of the Treaty of Versailles. Thoroughly anti-British perspective throughout, but with some surprisingly candid criticisms of Eamon de Valera. Puts much emphasis upon the effectiveness of Irish-American ethnic lobbying in the legislative branch.

Find this resource:

German Americans

If Irish America has had a rival historical claimant to the title of America's most influential ethnic diaspora, then that rival has been the US-German diaspora. Because the German-American diaspora was so large ([Schulze, et al. 2008](#); [Emmerich 2010](#)), in numbers even more numerous than the Irish-American one, it came to be adjudged a potentially formidable—and to the Anglo-American majority, an unwelcome—element in the shaping of America's foreign policy during the first two decades of the 20th century ([Child 1970](#), [Luebke 1974](#)). Like the Irish Americans, the German Americans would focus their activism upon foreign policy, with the twofold objective of working against the strengthening of US-UK security cooperation and combating efforts to darken the image of Germany in the United States, up until the point that the United States entered the First World War ([Johnson 1999](#), [Piller 2017](#)). For a brief time during these decades, an alliance was even forged between organizations representing these two large diasporas ([Johnson 1999](#)). Unlike the Irish Americans, however, German Americans would cease to play a major role in debates on foreign policy immediately upon America's entry into the First World War in April 1917 ([Hawgood 1940](#), [Johnson 1999](#)). Never again would great significance be imputed to this diaspora in influencing policy, which underwent a dramatic "identify shift" after that war, such that, henceforth, they would conceive of themselves as "Americans of German descent" rather than as German Americans ([Kazal 2004](#)). As a result, few could argue that the German diaspora in the United States played much of a role in foreign policy formulation in the run-up to the Second World War, which marked a sharp reversal of the situation preceding the First World War ([Holian 1996](#)). [Haglund and McNeil-Hay 2011](#) compares the impressive German lobby of that time with today's "Israel lobby," specifically how each one's defense of both parochial and American interests aroused suspicion.

- Child, Clifton James. *The German-Americans in Politics, 1914–1917*. New York: Arno, 1970.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Originally published in 1939. Concentrates on the transformation of German-American activism from its early focus upon combating sentiment in favor of Prohibition at the start of the 20th century to its subsequent struggle to prevent the Wilson administration from steering America into the camp of the Allied powers. [Piller 2017](#) offers a different perspective of the same struggle.

Find this resource:

- Emmerich, Alexander. *Die Geschichte der Deutschen in Amerika: Von 1680 bis zur Gegenwart*. Cologne: Fackelträger, 2010.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

An encyclopedic, and illustrated, history of the German demographic presence in America from the late 17th century until the present. Invaluable for contextualizing the diaspora that would, at the start of the 20th century, become increasingly mobilized around issues related to American foreign policy.

Find this resource:

- Haglund, David G., and Tyson McNeil-Hay. "The 'Germany Lobby' and US Foreign Policy: What, If Anything, Does It Tell Us about the Debate over the 'Israel Lobby?'" *Ethnopolitics* 10.3–4 (2011): 321–344.

DOI: [10.1080/17449057.2010.543803](https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2010.543803)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A comparative assessment of two apparently powerful ethnic lobbies, separated by a century, that seeks to shed light on contemporary debates regarding "parochial" interests versus the national interest. Suggests that the experience of the erstwhile "Germany lobby" ([Johnson 1999](#)) can help us understand the contemporary, and highly emotional, debate over the "Israel lobby."

Find this resource:

- **Hawgood, John A. *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States of America during the Nineteenth Century—and After*. New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1940.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues that the large German diaspora in America unwisely sought to remain relatively isolated from mainstream American society and would pay the price for doing so with the coming of the First World War. The diaspora's "social maladjustments" contrasted unfavorably with the far more effective, because integrated, Irish diaspora. Disputes the claim that Germans made any particularly outsized contribution to the Union cause during the Civil War.

Find this resource:

- **Holian, Timothy J. *The German-Americans and World War II: An Ethnic Experience*. New York: Peter Lang, 1996.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Unlike in the case of the experience of the German diaspora in the First World War, the coming of the Second World War saw Americans of German descent overwhelmingly opposed to Berlin's domestic and foreign policies, notwithstanding such exceptions as the naturalized American, Fritz Kuhn, and his "German-American People's League" (Deutschamerikanischer Volksbund). Still, thousands of German resident aliens were interned during the war.

Find this resource:

- **Johnson, Charles Thomas. *Culture at Twilight: The National German-American Alliance, 1901–1918*. New York: Peter Lang, 1999.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Pace [Hawgood 1940](#) and [Piller 2017](#), German Americans were both highly assimilated and well regarded by other Americans. At the beginning of the 20th century, they formed the country's largest ethnic lobby, whose organization (the National German American Alliance, or Deutsch-Amerikanischer National-Bund) numbered more than 2.5 million members. The lobby's influence collapsed with the US entry into the war against Germany in April 1917.

Find this resource:

- **Kazal, Russell A. *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Fascinating account of the transformation of German-American identity as a result of the strains imposed by wartime pressures on the diaspora to conform to "Americanism." This was accomplished to such an extent that, from the interwar years on, the German diaspora ceased being the standard bearer for "cultural pluralism" and became, in effect, one more element of a racialized "old stock" predicated upon "Nordic" cultural values.

Find this resource:

- **Luebke, Frederick C. *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I*. De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Recounts the transformation of the image of German Americans from the quite respectable "builders" of America of the late 19th century to the alien sympathizers suspected of pursuing a pan-German agenda on behalf of the Kaiser by the time of the First World War.

Find this resource:

- **Piller, Elisabeth Marie. "To Aid the Fatherland: German-Americans, Transatlantic Relief Work and American Neutrality, 1914–17." *Immigrants & Minorities* 35.3 (2017): 196–215.**

DOI: [10.1080/02619288.2017.1383691](https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.2017.1383691) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Picking up on where [Luebke 1974](#) leaves off, explores war relief activity for Germany by German Americans during the period of American neutrality in the First World War. This reinvigorated German Americans into a more cohesive and purposeful group, helping some to maintain a view of Germany's defensive position. German Americans saw this relief work as apolitical, humanitarian, and compatible with American values. Once the United States entered the war, German Americans took the position described in [Kazal 2004](#).

Find this resource:

- Schulze, Mathias, James M. Skidmore, David G. John, Grit Liebscher, and Sebastian Siebel-Achenbach, eds. *German Diasporic Experiences: Identity, Migration, and Loss*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A multidisciplinary project mounted by the Waterloo Centre for German Studies traces the German migratory experience through a series of multidisciplinary case studies. Situates the US-based diaspora within a wider global context.

Find this resource:

Anglo-Americans

Of all the country's nonindigenous peoples, the non-Irish British-descended Americans formed the largest group, but, unlike those other nonindigenous communities, until very recently they have not generally been styled as a diaspora, a category that many believe applies only to immigrants and not to "settlers." Early dissenters from this view were associated with the "cultural pluralism" of the early 20th century ([Kallen 1970](#), originally published in 1924), but it would not be until the latter years of that century when scholars began to call into question the logic of the immigrant-settler distinction, and argue that English Americans formed a diaspora in the United States in their own right ([Bueltmann and MacRaid 2017](#)). The case for assessing the impact of this ethnicity was strengthened by the "cultural turn" in American history, including diplomatic history ([Kelley 1979](#)). This led to an emphasis upon the implications that British ethnicity might be said to possess for American foreign policy ([Fischer 1989](#), [Mead 2001](#)). Also important were global trends, starting with the Anglo-American rapprochement at the turn of the 20th century ([Saveth 1965](#)), continuing with the creation of the post-Second World War "special relationship" between the United States and the United Kingdom, for which [Clark 1958](#), [Hitchens 2004](#), and [Haglund 2019](#) present alternative explanations, and culminating in recent discussions of a new transnational collective identity subsumed under the label "Anglosphere" ([Vucetic 2011](#)).

- Bueltmann, Tanja, and Donald M. MacRaid. *The English Diaspora in North America: Migration, Ethnicity and Association, 1730s–1950s*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017.

DOI: [10.7228/manchester/9781526103710.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9781526103710.001.0001) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The English in America were a diaspora, just as "ethnic" as other immigrants like the Germans and Irish. This runs against arguments that English Americans lacked the obstacles other immigrant groups faced and that they thus became "invisible" within the American mainstream. The empirical focus is on English fraternal societies in the United States and Canada that were generally apolitical and mildly patriotic toward England. Little attention, however, to tensions between Britain and the United States during the two world wars.

Find this resource:

- Clark, William. *Less than Kin: A Study of Anglo-American Relations*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Though not denying that the United States and United Kingdom do have a "special relationship," the author queries why, if Bismarck was correct in foreseeing an Anglo-American alliance as representing the "logic of history," it took the two countries so long to construct one. He answers that it was the development of common interests, rather than a collective identity based on "Anglo-Saxon kinship," that led to the alliance, contrary to the explanation proposed in [Haglund 2019](#).

Find this resource:

- Fischer, David H. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Shows how culturally diverse America's "British" identity really was, with implications for both domestic and foreign policy, with particular stress on the impact of the country's "Scotch-Irish" element. These latter hailed originally from the UK-Scottish border counties, spent a few generations in Ulster, and continued their migratory journey across the Atlantic, inspiring the "Jacksonian" (or "warrior") tradition in American foreign policy.

Find this resource:

- Haglund, David G. *The US “Culture Wars” and the Anglo-American Special Relationship*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

DOI: [10.1007/978-3-030-18549-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-18549-7) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A culture-based explanation for the origins of the Anglo-American relationship and of the entry of the United States into the First World War. Argues that the assault on English “civilization” by Irish Americans and German Americans had the unintended effect of laying the groundwork both for the US entry into the war and a lasting alliance with Britain, both of which were encouraged by English Americans. This is an alternative to explanations to [Clark 1958](#) and [Hitchens 2004](#), and one with more attention on inter-ethnic group relations in America.

Find this resource:

- Hitchens, Christopher. *Blood, Class, and Empire: The Enduring Anglo-American Relationship*. New York: Nation Books, 2004.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues that [Clark 1958](#) is only partly correct, for the answer to that author’s question about timing is to be found in that “grand triad of race, class, and empire—the trivium upon which the relationship rests” (p. 21). Importantly, transnational collective identity has performed a valuable function for America’s English diaspora, buttressing its identity at critical moments when it has faced challenges domestically from other ethnic constituencies.

Find this resource:

- Kallen, Horace M. *Culture and Democracy in the United States: Studies in the Group Psychology of the American Peoples*. New York: Arno, 1970.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Originally published in 1924. A collection of essays published during the decade 1914–1924 by the foremost advocate of “cultural pluralism” in America. Noteworthy for its insistence that Americans of British descent (called by the author “Brito-Americans”) also be regarded as an ethnic nationality in their own right and not as somehow representing the epitome of “Americanism.”

Find this resource:

- Kelley, Robert. *The Cultural Pattern in American Politics: The First Century*. New York: Knopf, 1979.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Construes culture as signifying “ethno-culture” and traces the impact of “folk rivalries” imported by immigrants from the United Kingdom upon the evolution of the American political system during the first century following independence.

Find this resource:

- Mead, Walter Russell. *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World*. New York: Knopf, 2001.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Takes the thesis in [Fischer 1989](#) for its inspiration and demonstrates that, while America might very well be “Albion’s seed,” a great variation is found in the four traditions (paradigms) of the country’s foreign policy that are derivative of the British/English diaspora, namely the Hamiltonian, Jeffersonian, Jacksonian, and Wilsonian paradigms—all indispensable for taking the measure of ethnicity’s impact on foreign policy.

Find this resource:

- Saveth, Edward N. *American Historians and European Immigrants, 1875–1925*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Originally published in 1948, this book traces the career of the “Teutonic thesis” from its origins as an inclusive school embracing the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon identities, held equally to have been the well-spring of America’s democratic traditions and foreign policy values, to the eviction of the Germans from Teutonism at the turn of the 20th century, with English-descended Americans rallying around their Anglo-Saxon identity.

Find this resource:

- Vucetic, Srdjan. *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Cautions that it is wrong to minimize the impact of transnational collective identity upon foreign policy orientations: there is an “Anglosphere,” it is geopolitically important, and it is based upon a “racialized identity” positing the superiority of Anglo-Saxon folkways and political values. Thus, realists and liberals alike, who stress common interests, are missing the forest and seeing only some trees.

Find this resource:

Recent and Contemporary Cases

Much of the controversy generated by allegations that ethnic diasporas have exerted too much sway over American policymaking is associated with developments in the Middle East, including, but not restricted to, US policy with respect to the Israel-Palestine question. It has also been said that ethnic diasporas have played a significant part in shaping US policy with regard to other regions, including Europe (in connection with the decision to enlarge the Atlantic Alliance), the periphery of the former Soviet empire, and America’s own “near abroad” in Latin America.

Greater Middle East

The greater Middle East, more than any other part of the world over the past few decades, has been a source of debate and controversy that comes close to matching the debates of a century ago regarding the part played by ethnic lobbies in the shaping of America’s foreign policy, such as surrounding its entry into the First World War. Attention has focused almost exclusively on the place of Israel, with the most important question centering on the reasons for the consistently strong American support of the Jewish state. Although the debate about an “Israel lobby” is not a new one, only since the mid-2000s has it flared up with an intensity hitherto rarely seen ([Mearsheimer and Walt 2007](#), [Lieberman 2009](#)). More recent, measured, and arguably less polemic studies have looked within the American Jewish population and leadership specifically to understand the sources of Jewish support *and dissent* of the “Israel lobby” ([Waxman 2016](#), [Waxman 2017](#), [Barnett 2016](#)). An entirely different source of American support for Israel is the large Evangelical Christian population in the United States, or the Christian Zionist movement as [Belin 2011](#) calls it. Academic research on this portion of the “Israel lobby” is much more recent, and there is disagreement over its influence on American conservative politics and foreign policy in the Middle East ([Amstutz 2014](#), [Belin 2011](#)). Regional lobbying is not confined to groups supportive of Israel, as the cohesion and general strength and effectiveness of an “Arab lobby” is judged varyingly in [Terry 2005](#), [Bard 2010](#), and [Mazrui 1996](#)). If part of this profuse lobbying effort relies on notions of Arabness or Arab-American identity, it is explored from a novel angle in [Naber 2012](#).

- **Amstutz, Mark R. *Evangelicals and American Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Evangelicals have played a more important role in US foreign affairs than is generally acknowledged. Explores how its theology has structured Evangelical advocacy on US foreign policy on Israel and global poverty. Traces the main evangelical approaches to Jews and Israel and argues that Christian Zionism’s influence is actually greatly exaggerated, contrary to the argument in [Belin 2011](#). Assumes that foreign policy is a moral enterprise, but does not directly engage with IR theories.

Find this resource:

- **Bard, Mitchell. *The Arab Lobby: The Invisible Alliance That Undermines America’s Interests in the Middle East*. New York: HarperCollins, 2010.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues, contrary to [Terry 2005](#), that the attention accorded to the Israel lobby is misdirected. Lobbying matters a great deal, but it is big oil and other components of the “Arab lobby” that account for the manner in which US Middle East policy gets formulated, to the detriment of the national interest.

Find this resource:

- **Barnett, Michael N. *The Star and the Stripes: A History of the Foreign Policies of American Jews*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.**

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A theoretically informed examination of what has motivated American Jews' foreign policy activism and lobbying regarding humanitarianism, global anti-Semitism, and Israel. Historically, American Jews' foreign policymaking shows two simultaneous and often conflicting motivators: particularism and Jewish nationalism, but also cosmopolitanism, liberalism, pluralism, and global justice. In IR terms, both identity and interests motivate their foreign policy interests. Draws from the argument in [Shain 1999](#) (cited under [General Overviews](#)) of immigrant groups adopting the "American Creed."

Find this resource:

- **Belin, Celia.** *Jésus est juif en Amérique: Droite évangélique et lobbies chrétiens pro-Israël.* Paris: Fayard, 2011.

[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

The Christian Zionist movement has become the most fervent and populous source of Israel advocacy in US foreign policymaking in the last few decades. It wields influence in American conservative politics, an alliance solidified by 9/11. It lobbies against the idea of Israel trading land for peace, and it is a major financier of West Bank settlements. It is fundamentalist rather than pragmatic, and its lobbying transforms a political, demographic, and territorial conflict into a religious one. It is, Belin argues, a significant threat to the peace process.

Find this resource:

- **Lieberman, Robert C.** "The 'Israel Lobby' and American Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 7.2 (2009): 235–257.

DOI: [10.1017/S153759270909077X](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

This critique of [Mearsheimer and Walt 2007](#) concentrates upon epistemological and methodological questions. Mearsheimer and Walt are said to have demonstrated "selection bias" in their choice of cases, as well as to have eschewed "covariation" in favor of "process tracing." Lieberman accepts that US policy is indeed tilted strongly in Israel's favor but doubts that this is because of the effects of lobbying.

Find this resource:

- **Mearsheimer, John J., and Stephen M. Walt.** *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

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This provocative argument first appeared as an article in the London Review of Books, and was greatly expanded for this publication. The claim is that America's strong tilt toward Israel is primarily a function of lobbying efforts, and that these efforts frustrate not only the promotion of America's national interest, but also that of Israel itself. It provoked criticism and alternative arguments about the pro-Israel lobby, pro-Arab lobby, and a so-called Jewish lobby, including several titles in this section.

Find this resource:

- **Naber, Nadine Christine.** *Arab America: Gender, Cultural Politics, and Activism.* New York: New York University Press, 2012.

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An insightful balance to [Terry 2005](#) on Arab identity. Analyzes the political activism of Arab-American young adults in Muslim global justice and Leftist Arab movements, both drawing on diasporism. Attention is on the cultural and political processes through which Arabness and Arab-American identity is forged, by negotiating religion, family, gender, and sexuality with American immigration politics, racism, and militarism. Argues that Arab-American identity is religio-racial and cannot be understood from analyses focused on either race or religion alone.

Find this resource:

- **Terry, Janice J.** *US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups.* London: Pluto, 2005.

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Broadens the scope of inquiry to include lobbying done by pro-Arab elements in the United States but ends by expressing skepticism about the power of explanations other than the lobbying thesis to account for the American tilt toward Israel. What is termed the "pro-Zionist lobby" is simply too powerful to be counterbalanced by pro-Arab lobbies.

Find this resource:

- **Waxman, Dov.** *Trouble in the Tribe: The American Jewish Conflict Over Israel.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.

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Explores the increasingly contentious place of Israel among American Jews since the 1970s, through the lens of national Jewish advocacy organizations, Jewish media, and organizations that comprise the "pro-Israel lobby" and

their interactions with Congress. Argues that there is a growing chasm between the leadership of these organizations and the majority of American Jews who are much less “hawkish.” Also argues that generational and denominational differences can largely explain the positions of American Jews on aspects of the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Find this resource:

- **Waxman, Dov. “American Jews and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?” *Political Science Quarterly* 132.2 (2017): 313–340.**

DOI: [10.1002/polq.12617](#)[Save Citation »](#)[Export Citation »](#)[E-mail Citation »](#)

The argument that the pro-Israel lobby is the main inhibitor of the United States brokering a peace deal and holding Israel to account for its use of military force exaggerates its influence. The pro-Israel lobby does *not* control foreign policy toward the Middle East or Israel, contrary to [Terry 2005](#), but it is influential in maintaining and increasing aid and especially military aid to Israel. First, the “lobby” is actually a “cacophony of voices,” and, second, aside from pro-Israel groups there is longstanding and widespread support for Israel among the American public and in foreign policymaking.

Find this resource:

Other Policy Debates

When attention has turned to regions other than the Middle East, it has been accompanied by a debate as to the policy impact of American-based diasporas with “ancient affections.” American immigration policies soon after the Second World War were much influenced by the threat of communists, fascists, and nationalists from eastern and central Europe and the USSR, for instance, and the negative impact they may have on Americans’ view of those ideologies and the Cold War ([Verovšek 2018](#)). Illustratively, some of the most complex policy challenges since the 1990s have been triggered by the need to respond to the disappearance of the Soviet empire in central and eastern Europe and, subsequently, of the Soviet Union itself. Regarding debates on German unification in 1990, for instance, Polish-American, German-American, and Jewish-American leaderships weighed on debates in Congress, through representatives, to express concern or support for reunification ([Schemper 2017](#)). Another challenge involved what should be done about the Atlantic Alliance, the answer coming in the form of a decision to enlarge NATO. Many reasons have been adduced for this decision, not the least that the US government responded readily to the desire expressed by Poland and other former members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization to join the alliance because of concern about the perceived electoral clout of Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and other central and eastern European diasporas. [Goldgeier 1999](#) and [Asmus 2002](#) indicate that the hypothesis may hold some merit but warn against overstating it. With the demise of the Soviet empire came a new focus upon ethnic conflict (see [Ethnic Conflict and Diasporas](#)), initially in the volatile Caucasus region, where a war that broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh engaged the energies of America’s small but well-organized “Armenian lobby” on behalf of the kin country, which is detailed in [Ambrosio 2002](#). A different, more cautionary perspective is offered in both [Lindsay 2002](#) and [Paquin 2010](#), each of which offers reasons for reducing the analytical emphasis placed upon ethnic diasporas. The much less volatile Canada-United States security relationship has nonetheless been affected by diasporas also, which [Haglund 2015](#) shows with the German, Irish, and the more recent Muslim diasporas in both countries. Finally, no bibliographical assessment of the link between ethnic diasporas and US foreign policy (and, indeed, domestic policy) would be complete without mention of the impact of two diasporas with roots in Latin America. [Haney and Vanderbush 1999](#) addresses the Cuban-American impact on foreign policy, while [Fraga, et al. 2011](#) analyzes the generic category of American “Latinos” with a view to determining this constituency’s policy preferences, including those related to external affairs.

- **Ambrosio, Thomas. “Congressional Perceptions of Ethnic Cleansing: Reactions to the Nagorno-Karabagh War and the Influence of Ethnic Interest Groups.” *Review of International Affairs* 2.1 (2002): 24–45.**

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Shows that the US tilt toward Armenia during its conflict with its Caucasian neighbor was motivated less by strategic considerations (which, in fact, tended to suggest the United States should support Azerbaijan) than by domestic political considerations stemming from the successful lobbying in Congress undertaken by Armenian-American groups. In the words of the disappointed Azeri ambassador to the United States, Hafiz Pashayev, “we don’t have an American diaspora” (p. 24).

Find this resource:

- **Asmus, Ronald D. *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.**

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Similar to [Goldgeier 1999](#), but with greater emphasis placed upon the strategic objectives identified by the Clinton White House. Agrees with Goldgeier on the strategic rationale behind the enlargement decision (expanding the democratic “zone of peace”), and also highlights the role of ethnic groups, especially Polish Americans, whose demographic concentration in so-called battleground states made both major parties anxious to garner their votes.

Find this resource:

- **Fraga, Louis R., John A. Garcia, Rodney E. Haro, Michael Jones-Correa, Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and Gary M. Segura. *Latinos in the New Millennium: An Almanac of Opinion, Behavior, and Policy Preferences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.**

DOI: [10.1017/CBO9781139083577](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

A repository of data concerning the large and diverse Latino community in the United States, which sheds much light on one of today’s “hot-button” questions, namely what do America’s Hispanics want, both in domestic policy and in foreign policy? The authors stress that how, and whether, they can successfully adapt will have a great bearing on America’s future domestic as well as foreign policies.

Find this resource:

- **Goldgeier, James M. *Not Whether but When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999.**

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A pioneering inquiry into how the United States decided NATO should be enlarged, with the emphasis upon key actors in the relevant units of the executive branch, the “policy entrepreneurs.” The factors of importance to the latter included enlargement’s likely political appeal to ethnic white voters, particularly in states in the Midwest and Northeast where the Democrats had been beaten by Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush in the previous decade.

Find this resource:

- **Haglund, David G. *Ethnic Diasporas and the Canada-United States Security Community: From the Civil War to Today*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.**

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Examines how ethnic diasporas have impacted the Canada-US “security community” through two historical cases, Irish Americans and German Americans, and the contemporary case of Muslims in both countries. Their impact on the origins and evolution of this security community has been through “clandestine transnational actors” and ethnic lobbying to shape the “national interest.” The impact of the US-based ethnic lobbies is, of course, more consequential to the security community than that of the Canada-based ethnic lobbies.

Find this resource:

- **Haney, Patrick J., and Walt Vanderbush. “The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in US Foreign Policy: The Case of the Cuban American National Foundation.” *International Studies Quarterly* 43.2 (1999): 341–361.**

DOI: [10.1111/0020-8833.00123](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

This study on the workings of the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF) lays great stress upon the congruence between what the lobby wanted and what the US government wanted. In short, the national interest was not suborned by “parochial” interests. CANF “succeeded” because, from its founding in 1981, it was used as a tool by administrations in Washington to promote anti-Castro policy objectives.

Find this resource:

- **Lindsay, James M. “Getting Uncle Sam’s Ear: Will Ethnic Lobbies Cramp America’s Foreign Policy Style?” *Brookings Review* 20.1 (2002): 37–40.**

DOI: [10.2307/20081021](#)[Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Answers the subtitle’s question in the negative: “in the main, the end result of ethnic lobbying will be not so much to capture American foreign policy as to enrich it” (p. 40). What counts most for lobbying success are the diaspora’s size, commitment, unity, resources, and political skill, partly contradicting what Saideman and Rubenzer have argued (see [Saideman 2002](#) and [Rubenzer 2008](#), cited under [Ethnic Lobbying](#)). Author predicts that the next important ethnic

lobby to emerge will be the Indian Americans, a prediction that [Sharma 2017](#) (cited under [Ethnic Lobbying](#)) would support.

Find this resource:

- **Paquin, Jonathan. *A Stability-Seeking Power: US Foreign Policy and Secessionist Conflicts*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010.**

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Even more so than [Lindsay 2002](#), Paquin sees little evidence that parochial interests are subverting the national interest. Concentrating on America's response to secessionist crises in southeastern Europe (viz., the former Yugoslavia) and the Horn of Africa since the 1990s, the author finds that ethnic lobbies have had very little to do with determining Washington's policy.

Find this resource:

- **Schemper, Lukas. "Diasporas and American Debates on German Unification." *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 15.1 (2017): 41–60.**

DOI: [10.1080/14794012.2016.1265349](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Examines how Jewish Americans, Polish Americans, and German Americans involved themselves in congressional debates on German unification in 1990. Jewish-American and Polish-American leaderships expressed concerns independently of each other, but Congress supported unification for economic and security reasons, as did German Americans. This marked the beginning of post-Cold War increased ethnic lobbying influence in Congress, whereas during the Cold War virtually all diasporas in the United States supported a foreign policy that stood against Soviet communism. This complements several sources in [German Americans](#).

Find this resource:

- **Verovšek, Peter J. "Screening Migrants in the Early Cold War: The Geopolitics of U.S. Immigration Policy." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 20.4 (2018): 154–179.**

DOI: [10.1162/jcws_a_00841](#) [Save Citation](#) » [Export Citation](#) » [E-mail Citation](#) »

Argues that foreign policy after the Second World War relied on anti-communist immigrants and exiles from eastern and central Europe and their political mobilization. This policy, guided by security concerns, resulted in the systematic admission of nationalists, fascists, and anti-communists who formed East European ethnic lobbies encouraging policymakers to adopt hardline stances toward the USSR and Communist regimes. Given that ethnic groups have become the most important determinants of foreign policy in Congress, the author cautions that immigration policymakers should consider these events a lesson.

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