

Rethinking Models of Minority Political Participation: Inter- and Intra-group Variation in Political “Styles”

Existing research on political participation of minorities and immigrants has produced a series of different models applicable to different groups. In assigning a single model per group, however, the literature effectively neglected heterogeneity within, as well as commonality across, racial and ethnic categories. Using survey data from Los Angeles, this article develops a different approach, one that focuses on detecting the within-group heterogeneity and the common repertoire of political “styles” that make up the heterogeneity. First, without regard to race and ethnicity, I detect the clusters of multiple variables that define different “styles” of political participation. Then I proceed to break down racial and ethnic categories by observing the distribution of political “styles” across groups, producing a two-way matrix of identity categories and “styles.” The matrix presents racial and ethnic categories not as *natural* makers of difference, but as a *contingent* node in the nexus of political “styles.” I conclude by arguing that this mode of understanding and representing minority politics brings us one step closer to the empirical reality in which minority politics is increasingly becoming a norm rather than an exception.