APSA | Education Politics and Policy

The Organized Section in Education Politics and Policy of the American Political Science Association

Newsletter

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From the President

Greetings! As the new section president, I'm excited to provide support and leadership for this organization. I greatly appreciate the work by Leslie K. Finger, Agustina Paglayan, and everyone who served formally or informally to institutionalize our section and build a thriving community for scholarship in education politics and policy within APSA. It has been so encouraging to see this section take shape and build connections between education scholars in American and Comparative Politics and across different disciplines.

Thanks to the hard work of Jason Giersch and Emmerich Davies, our new and previous Communication Officers, we have a great collection of contributions in this issue of the newsletter. **Julian Garritzmann** and **Joan Ricart-Huguet** contributed essays summarizing some of the exciting research they've been doing on public opinion and educational inequality, respectively. Next, Jason interviews **Elizabeth Sharrow** and **James Druckman**, the winners of our 2022 Best Paper Award, for "Legacies of Title IX: The Impact of Segregation on Policy Coalitions." Finally, you will find an impressive list of recent accomplishments and publications by section members.

It was wonderful to see so many section members at APSA 2022 in Montreal at the panels, the business meeting, and the happy hour. I am looking forward to planning another compelling slate of panels for the APSA 2023 conference in Los Angeles and hope to see you there. Please note that proposal submission for APSA 2023 is now open, with a submission deadline of January 18, 2023. Education Politics and Policy is Division 59. Also, please remember to renew your section membership when it comes time to renew your membership with APSA—and spread the word to friends and colleagues about our wonderful section!

Also, please save the date for our **Spring Virtual Conference—March 9 and 10, 2023**. The call for papers for the virtual conference will go out in early January. We look forward to many great submissions of new and ongoing research for this event.

Enjoy the newsletter. If you have suggestions for future issues, please reach out to **Jason Giersch** (jgiersch@uncc.edu).

Sincerely,

Sarah Reckhow
Associate Professor of Political Science, Michigan State University
President and Chair, APSA Education Politics and Policy Section

Four Facts I Learned about Public Opinion on Education Policy

Julian Garritzmann
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After having been neglected for a long time, there has been a recent upsurge in research on the politics of education in Europe and other OECD countries. Scholars have explored the role of political actors (especially parties, employer associations, unions), socio-economic factors (especially globalization, deindustrialization, and demographic change), and institutions (especially political institutions and policy legacies via feedback effects) on the politics of education.

A major gap, though, was the study of public opinion. A simple reason for this was the lack of data: We simply didn't have any public opinion surveys on education policy. Existing comparative surveys like the European Social Survey (ESS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), or Eurobarometer hardly ever included questions on education policy – and if they did, these questions remained rather abstract and somewhat "hollow", asking for example, whether people would like to spend more money on education (of course they do!). A recent volume by Martin West and Ludger Woessmann systematically reviews this existing literature, bringing together expertise from North America and Europe.

We aimed to address this gap empirically and theoretically with a detailed public opinion survey in Western Europe. Our INVEDUC survey ("Investing in Education in Europe") interviewed a representative sample in eight Western European countries. It includes a lot of questions on education policy, from attitudes towards spending (e.g., public, private, different levels) to attitudes towards governance (e.g., private schools, school tracking, etc.) and the connection between education policy and other policy areas. The data and all documentation is publicly available – we very much invite you to take a look.

Here are four facts that I learned:

Fact 1: Everyone loves education - but this love is not unconditional

The few existing public opinion surveys covering education policy usually ask whether respondents would like to "spend more money on education". As you can guess, large majorities agree. In most countries 70-90 percent of the population agrees. And, as there are no strings attached, why shouldn't they? Our INVEDUC survey replicates these findings, showing that everyone loves education.

Going further, however, we also show that this love isn't unconditional. As soon as we remind respondents about potential costs of additional spending, support declines. Our survey experiments show that support drops from 72% to 48% when education spending would

require tax increases; it drops further to 41% when financed by additional public debt; and even to 26% when additional education spending would be financed by pension cuts.

This implies that while education policy generally is very popular, it is actually difficult to create majorities to back additional spending. It also implies that it matters a lot how discussions about education are politically framed. The more prominent potential trade-offs become in the debate, the lower the public support levels.

More recently, studying these trade-off politics has become a growing subfield in this literature (for example in Neimanns et al. 2018; Garritzmann et al. 2021; Garritzmann, Schwander 2021; Bremer, Bürgisser 2022; Häusermann et al. 2021).

Fact 2: People have multidimensional policy preferences – education is part of a social investment dimension

How do attitudes towards education policy relate to attitudes towards those of other social policies (e.g., pensions, health care, or labor market policy)? There is a prominent debate in the European literature whether education policy is part of the welfare state or not. Our research showed that, on the one hand, education policy is special – in the sense that attitudes towards education policy do not correlate much with attitudes towards other public or social policies. That is, while people's attitudes towards pensions, health care, labor market, and other social policies tend to correlate and follow a rather similar political logic, attitudes towards education (and their determinants) have a different political dynamic.

On the other hand, however, we found that attitudes towards education are quite closely related to attitudes towards other social investment policies, i.e. policies that aim at creating, preserving, or mobilizing human skills and capabilities such as early childhood education and care policies, active labor market policies, or conditional cash transfers. Using factor analyses and other tools we detected that people's attitudes are multidimensional: We detect a "compensatory social policy dimension", a "social investment dimension", and a "workfare" dimension. Simply put, respondents' attitudes towards education are closely related to their attitudes towards other social investments – but independent of other social policies.

Fact 3: Education has its own politics

Third, and relatedly, we identified distinct supporting groups of the different welfare approaches: Traditional compensatory social policies (like pensions) are supported the most by low-income, low-educated people, by those leaning towards traditional social values and those leaning economically towards the left. Education and social investments, in contrast, are supported the most by the more educated and those with more left-libertarian views across all economic strata. To some degree, there are systematic gender differences, but these are more complex than simple models predicted, as women support some social investment policies much more than others: We found that women are much more supportive of policies that help them to preserve their skills in times of career interruptions and policies that help to mobilize

their skills for the labor market, while there are no gender differences in skill creation policies, arguably because women on average are nowadays already better skilled than men.

Moreover, political trust plays a major role for people's preferences, as those who trust politicians more, are also much more likely to support a more future-oriented welfare state. These patterns do not only hold in Europe, but travel to many countries around the globe.

Fact 4: Public opinion matters – but only under two conditions

Finally, does public opinion matter? Do politicians ever listen to public opinion? We explored this question using the case of education policy in our book "A Loud But Noisy Signal" using a multi-method design. We identified two necessary conditions for public opinion influence: Policy-makers only listen when an issue receives a considerable degree of public attention (i.e. it has to be salient) and when public opinion is rather coherent. In this "Loud Politics" scenario, public opinion is most likely to matter. If in contrast an issue is not salient ("Quiet Politics") interest groups dominate and public opinion is neglected. If an issue is salient, but public opinion polarized on the issue, public opinion helps to bring issues on the agenda, but the respective governing parties essentially establish their own preferences, irrespective of public opinion.

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The Political Consequences of Unequal Education in Africa

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The first three issues of the Newsletter emphasized current education policy in the United States and the impact of COVID on learning. In this short article, I shift gears to discuss what the history of education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) tells us about the formation of political elites and contemporary inequality in political representation. A large body of research on SSA has shown that, in spite of the deleterious effects of colonialism and slavery for development and trust, colonial-era missionaries increased long-term literacy and political participation, living standards, and levels of democracy. This has been a fruitful area of research, at the intersection of education and political economy, showing the positive *average* effect of private (i.e., missionary) education on these outcomes.

In my recent work and book project, tentatively titled *Unequal Education: The Origins of Elite Power in Contemporary Africa*, I pay close attention to regional inequality in access to private and public education within former colonies. We know from historical accounts that education tended to be highly concentrated in one or two districts in each colony, including in the 16 East and West African countries that I examine. I generalize qualitative accounts and quantitative country-specific studies by collecting data on colonial investments, including missionary and government-provided education. Both types are important because, while missionaries dominated the provision of education in British colonies such as Uganda, France banned missionaries during some periods so the colonial government was responsible for education provision (this meant more public education in more developed colonies like Senegal but also meant that access to education was extremely scarce in peripheral colonies like Niger).

Overall, I find that districts in the colonial period that were more educated—though not always more developed—are systematically more represented in the cabinet after independence, even as regimes change. In other words, they punch above their demographic weight. In addition to the data on colonial investments, my analysis also relies on the collection of biographical information of the roughly 5,000 cabinet ministers in the 16 countries under study and on fieldwork in Senegal and Uganda, including interviews with ministers, scholars, and other relevant actors.

My findings run contra conventional accounts in African politics, which emphasize that who sits in African cabinets fluctuates as often as leaders change because security considerations and ethnic calculus are paramount.

Why are more educated districts during colonial rule more politically represented after independence? The literature has often characterized or even caricatured African presidents as highly cynical and focused on corruption and short-term goals, like preventing coups. This conventional wisdom is not entirely off, of course, especially for military leaders. However, I

argue that many civilian presidents in SSA care about the human capital and technical competence of their ministers because signaling competence, and the better policy outcomes that tend to result from it, increases the government's legitimacy. Since colonial-era education was both very scarce and highly unequal, the best-prepared individuals hailed from a couple of districts in each colony, leading to their over-representation in post-colonial governments.

In short, African leaders have long considered both human capital, in addition short-term stability concerns, when composing their cabinets. I argue that there is some tension between the two because human capital is regionally-concentrated (a colonial legacy) *and* the political exclusion of some groups from the cabinet hinders political stability (as research on conflict has shown). For example, access to education in Uganda's Northwest (West Nile region) was minimal. As a result, the civilian cabinets of the 1960s had next to no ministers from West Nile. Some of its inhabitants had joined the British colonial military because literacy was not a requirement for entry. A sergeant from West Nile, Idi Amin, "solved" its underrepresentation by overthrowing the civilian president of Uganda in a coup—and satisfied his desire for power along the way.

Senegal provides another interesting example. About 14% of the ministers have hailed from Saint-Louis since independence, a city with about 2% of the Senegalese population. Conventional accounts of regional favoritism in the form of cabinet-level patronage cannot explain why because no Senegalese president was ever born in Saint-Louis. Further, Saint-Louis ceased to be the political capital of French West Africa in 1902 and the capital of Senegal at independence in 1960, both times in favor of Dakar. However, Saint-Louis remained the "education capital" of Senegal throughout the colonial period in spite of an economic decline that started decades earlier. This, I argue, is critically important to understand its political over-representation many decades later. Senegalese Presidents Leopold Sédar Senghor (1960-1980), Abdou Diouf (1981-2000), and Abdoulaye Wade (2000-2012) drew from cadres, such as high-level civil servants, to compose their cabinets, and these cadres were disproportionately from Saint-Louis.

Senegal has been free from coups and civil wars since independence, but that is not the case of most East and West African countries. The very unequal regional distribution of colonial investments, including in education, contributed in some cases to spur resentment between "ethnoregional groups" after independence. This is why it is all the more unfortunate that international organizations such as the World Bank focused for a long time on *levels* of education and on country-level aggregates to benchmark development results. The cost of an additional school near the capital is lower because the infrastructure already exists, but equity in access is sacrificed in the process and so are the high social rates of return that come from schooling disadvantaged regions. My book project argues that paying attention to the regional distribution of education is paramount in order to increase the economic and political development of peripheral regions and thus rebalance countries, like Uganda and Senegal, where activity increasingly revolves around the capital. By arguing that regional gaps in access to education should be reduced, that is, by emphasizing regional equity *even* if that means sacrificing some efficiency, my book also hopes to inform education policy.

One general thought to conclude. In a 2014 piece, Gift and Wibbels rightly stated that, "apart from some notable exceptions, education is regrettably understudied in comparative politics." These exceptions have since become more numerous and more notable, and the existence of

our new Section is one of its consequences. To render that statement obsolete, we also need other political scientists to embrace—as economists and sociologists did decades ago—that the study of education fully belongs in our discipline. After all, education is not only inseparable from economic development and society but also from empowered citizenship and public life.

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Interview with James Druckman and Elizabeth Sharrow

Winners of the Best Education Politics and Policy Paper, 2022

Congratulations on the award! Since this paper hasn't yet been published, can you give us a quick summary?

In a broad sense, we are interested in the impact of institutions on policy support. We study this with a focus on gender equity policies and recipient populations in the context of college athletics. We are concerned with how institutions may adversely affect policies that improve the status of marginalized groups (e.g., Title IX). When institutions – informal or formal – segregate people from different groups, they undermine inter-personal contact. That contact is often a crucial pathway, for members of dominant groups, to understanding the plight of the marginalized group, and to building subsequent policy support. In short, institutions that segregate can undermine policy coalitions that are often necessary for marginalized groups who are in the numeric minority. Athletics provides a framework where the segregating institution – i.e., sex segregated teams – is clear and largely uncontested in the status quo. Moreover, female student-athletes, even 50 years after the passage of Title IX, continue to face vast inequities in terms of participation opportunities, leadership/employment opportunities, and resources (i.e., they are marginalized in the realm of college sport). We use two, original large-scale surveys (one of which includes an experiment) of student-athletes to show that sex segregation does undermine support – among men – for gender equity policies. We exploit variation in amount of inter-sex contact among athletes who participate in single-sex versus co-ed teams to demonstrate that policy support is undermined by a lack of inter-personal contact. This has clear policy implications: to address inequalities, institutions should take at least some steps towards de-segregation.

Tell us a little bit about how you first came up with the idea to examine segregation as a force shaping the policy coalitions in sports.

Sex segregation is normalized in athletics even though in virtually every other domain of social life, segregation is anathema. We were interested in understanding the impacts of sex segregation and what role it plays in persistently marginalizing women. In prior work, Sharrow studied the policy history of debates over Title IX's implementation in college sport. This work revealed that segregation in policy design was contested in the period following the passage of Title IX; denaturalizing this structure of and for athletic competition raised a host of new empirical questions about the impacts of policy design. We were both persistently puzzled by the question of why college athletics remains so resistant to fully implementing equity policy at the same time as we were increasingly steeped in the literatures that study policy target populations and their potential emergence as participants in the policy process. We sought to

build on this by exploring the relationship between policy support (for Title IX specifically, and a host of nascent policies aimed at gender equity) and inter-personal contact between women and men.

What are some common misperceptions about Title IX that we should address in our political science courses?

Title IX is often celebrated as an inflection point that led to the massive expansion of educational opportunities for women. In many domains, such as classrooms, non-discrimination policy indeed cleared the way for full equality in many disciplines. Yet, when it comes to college athletics – an area that received virtually no serious consideration before Congress passed Title IX – policy design has enabled extraordinary gaps in opportunities and resources, even as it made inroads for women's teams. The impacts of segregation in sport are under-appreciated, particularly when the public conversation overly focuses on evaluating policy based on changes to women's sporting status before Title IX. When teaching about Title IX, we hope that educators will emphasize the unevenness of policy impacts and will encourage students to question the many complications rendered by a sex segregated system.

There must be some universities that only offer sports without any sort of gender designations or restrictions. Are you aware of any, and how have those policies worked out?

Among NCAA schools that sponsor varsity sports teams, such non-sex-specific teams are notably few (e.g., rifle teams, equestrian). This is due to policy guidelines that promote sex separate teams and competition. However, many universities sponsor teams where co-ed training, travel, and coaching are more common, even if competition remains sex segregated. We find that men who participate on teams where training is often co-ed – usually track and field or swimming and diving – interact more with female student-athletes and consequently become more supportive of gender equity policies. There are still very few examples of women who participate on "men's" teams, in large measure because Title IX's policy design incentivizes universities to create separate teams for women instead of enabling women's access to existing teams. In some sports, women can actually be denied even the opportunity to try out for the "men's" team if a similar team exists for women. The end of such rules and increased women's participation on historically "men's" programs is something that we would see as a positive change. In other work, we show that support for such integrated opportunities, particularly in non-contact sports, is quite high among those in college athletics and the general public. Additionally, we hope that increasing the numbers of teams without gendered designations will also help decrease hostility toward trans and non-binary athletes participating on both segregated and integrated teams.

Some of your previous collaborations have examined equity in college sports. Now that college athletes can more easily profit from their name, image, and likeness, what new questions would you like to explore in your research?

That's so nice you know about our prior work! This is a tricky question. It is of course a positive that student-athletes can receive benefits that they have long been excluded from, and women student-athletes have benefited notably from NIL. Yet, there are at least two reasons for serious concern. First, the new NIL space is highly unregulated and student-athletes are left to navigate this on their own. This adds even more stress to their already extremely overextended lives which could have negative health, social, and/or educational consequences. Second, a fair amount of the marketing of women student-athletes have returned to invoking old sexist tropes and hyper-sexualized marketing tactics which could undermine efforts to move away from expectations that women student-athletes must look a certain way or participate only in specific sports. The NCAA is averse to direct payment but doing so would keep it regulated and also put less of the onus on the student-athletes. With NIL, the NCAA continues to exploit student-athletes and, as far as we know, has not actively sought to counter the concerns that we and others have raised.

As it stands, we're excited that some of the research in this paper is forthcoming in a book, *Equality Unfulfilled: How Title IX's Policy Design Undermines Change to College Sports*, with Cambridge University Press. In it, we also explore the possibilities for change to gender equity policies driven by athletic leadership and/or the general public and college sports fans. We also have on-going research into support for sex integrated teams and for transgender inclusion in college sport. We have been buoyed and humbled by the support of the Ed Politics and Policy section!

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Interviewed by **Jason Giersch**, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Recent Books, Articles, and Notable Achievements

Articles

Afzal, Muhammad Hassan Bin. 2021. Recommended practices for doctoral students in navigating and engaging in online courses during COVID-19 pandemic: A personal narrative from a doctoral candidate. *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*.

Afzal, Muhammad Hassan Bin. 2022. The effects of the global health crisis on U. S. immigration policies: shifting political agenda-setting and the mobility crisis of immigrants. *SN Social Sciences*.

Brown, Jessica, Elizabeth Burton, Emma Kettle, Lesley Lavery, and Kristine West. 2022. Effect of Start Time Changes on Enrollment. *American School Board Journal*.

Cabal, Manuel. 2022. Regionalism against Centralization: Resistance to Federal Education after the Mexican Revolution. *Publius: The Journal of Federalism.*

Davies, Emmerich. Forthcoming. The Lessons Private Schools Teach: Using a Field Experiment to Understand the Effects of Private Services on Political Behavior. *Comparative Political Studies.*

Giersch, Jason, and Scott Liebertz. 2022. Ideology and Religion in Students' Attitudes toward Economically and Socially Conservative Professors. *Journal of Political Science Education*.

Giudici, Anja, Jane Gingrich, Tom Chevalier, and Matthias Haslberger. 2022. Center-Right Parties and Post-War Secondary Education. *Comparative Politics.*

James, Sarah. 2022. Mea Culpa? The Role of Data Collection in Public Officials Acknowledging Policy Failure. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly.*

Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy. 2021. Shared Governance within the Autocratic Academy. *Inside Higher Ed*.

Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy. 2022. Challenging the Faithless Trustees of Seattle Pacific University. *Academe Blog*.

Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy. 2022. How Not To Think About Institutional Racism. *Inside Higher Ed.*

Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy. 2022. Lawyers, Guns and Autonomy. *Inside Higher Ed*.

Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy. 2022. Neofascism, Florida Style. *Academe Blog*.

Kogan, Vladimir. 2022. Locally Elected School Boards Are Failing. *Education Next.*

Kogan, Vladimir. 2022. The Choice in Education Governance Debates: Complacency or Reform? *Education Next.*

Lavery, Lesley and Ashley Jochim. 2022. Why Charter Teachers Unionize. *Educational Policy.*

Lyon, Melissa, Annie Hemphill, and Rebecca Jacobsen. 2022. How Do Unions Create Candidates? *Political Behavior*.

Paglayan, Agustina S. 2022. Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of State-Building. *American Political Science Review*.

Patrick, Justin. 2022. Overcoming the student representation-student partnership dichotomy: Toward a political conception of the student voice. *Higher Education*.

Books and Chapters in Books

Afzal, Muhammad Hassan Bin. 2022. The Role of Legislative Policy Entrepreneurs in Bridging the Digital Gaps for Immigrants in Host Communities Amidst Global Health Crises. In: Auer, M.E., Hortsch, H., Michler, O., Köhler, T. (eds) *Mobility for Smart Cities and Regional Development - Challenges for Higher Education*. ICL 2021. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 390. Springer, Cham.

Bass, Scott. 2022. *Administratively Adrift: Overcoming Institutional Barriers for College Student Success.* Cambridge University Press.

Gellman, Mneesha (ed). 2022. *Education Behind the Wall: Why and How We Teach College in Prison*. Brandeis University Press.

Gellman, Mneesha. 2023. *Indigenous Language Politics in the Schoolroom: Cultural Survival in Mexico and the United States*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Hartney, Michael T. 2022. *How Policies Make Interest Groups: Governments, Unions, and American Education.* University of Chicago Press.

Kaufman-Osborn, Timothy. 2023. *The Autocratic Academy: Reenvisioning Rule within America's Universities*. Duke University Press.

Lay, J. Celeste. 2022. *Public Schools, Private Government: Education Reform & Democracy in New Orleans*. Temple University Press.

Awards, Promotions, and other Recognition

"The Non-Democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 Years," written by **Agustina S. Paglayan** (UCSD) and published in the *APSR*, received the 2022 Best Article Award from APSA's Democracy & Autocracy Section.

APSA awarded **Sarah James** the Leonard D. White Award for the best dissertation in the field of public administration.

Hassan Afzal earned a full scholarship from Yale University in attaining the Climate Change and Health Certificate from Yale University School of Public Health this Spring, 2022, with a 4.0 GPA.

Mneesha Gellman was the 2020 Senior Fellow in Education for Sustainable Peace at the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media in Braunschweig, Germany.