



Horizons of Politics  
2013, Vol. 4, N° 9

**KONRAD OŚWIECIMSKI**

Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow  
Institute of Political Science

## **What Makes Ethnic Groups in the United States Politically Effective**

### *Summary*

This article concerns the potential influence of ethnic interest groups on U.S. foreign policy. Are they successful? It is rather difficult to answer this question. This article concentrates, though, on something else. By looking at the examples of some ethnic groups, and their activity it points to the circumstances that can potentially enhance their influence. It identifies and analyzes the groups' and their members' characteristics as well as the political environment they are lobbying in. Factors such as the identity of the members of the diaspora, the character of their relations with the country of origin, the degree of assimilation, their socio-economic status seem to be a matter of considerable significance. As far as the size of an ethnic population is concerned, it is more complicated. It is not the mere size of a particular ethnic population that counts but the number of people who really care. The article also analyses the external determinants that are in a groups' favor. The mobilization of potential activists is more probable when the interests of the country of origin are under threat, and when there is a clearly identifiable enemy. The potential for success increases when it is possible for the an ethnic

interest group to build a coalition with other lobbies and when the goals that it tries to achieve are not in conflict with the interests of the United States, as it is perceived by decision makers.

**KEYWORDS**

Ethnic groups, the United States, lobbying, political influence, interest groups, Jewish lobby, Cuban lobby, Armenian lobby

UWARUNKOWANIA POLITYCZNEJ  
EFEKTYWNOŚCI ETNICZNYCH GRUP INTERESU  
W STANACH ZJEDNOCZONYCH

*Streszczenie*

Niniejszy artykuł poświęcony jest kwestiom związanym z potencjalnym wpływem organizacji etnicznych na politykę zagraniczną USA. W jakim stopniu grupy te wywierają wpływ na amerykańską politykę? Na to pytanie nie da się raczej odpowiedzieć. Artykuł niniejszy skupia się na innej kwestii, a mianowicie na określeniu czynników, które mogą wpływać na to, że grupy będą bardziej lub mniej skuteczne w swojej działalności lobbingowej. Na skuteczność tę w znacznym stopniu wpływają między innymi tożsamość członków diaspory, charakter relacji z krajem ojczystym, stopień asymilacji w kraju przyjmującym. Jeżeli chodzi o rozmiar grupy etnicznej, to sprawa jest w pewnym sensie skomplikowana, gdyż sam rozmiar populacji nie odgrywa takiej roli jak liczba jej członków, którym naprawdę zależy na dobru ich bądź przodków ich byłej ojczyzny. Jest ona ciężka do oszacowania i zależy w znacznej mierze od umiejętności mobilizacyjnej przywódców organizacji etnicznych. Oprócz czynników związanych z samymi charakterystykami grup w artykule pojawia się również refleksja nad wpływem czynników zewnętrznych. Potencjał mobilizacyjny i konsekwentnie skuteczność lobbingowa wzrasta, gdy kraj pochodzenia jest zagrożony, jak również, gdy występuje łatwo identyfikowalny wróg bądź przeciwnik. Prawdopodobieństwo sukcesu wzrasta również, gdy grupie udaje się zbudować koalicję z innymi grupami interesu oraz przede wszystkim gdy cele, o które zabiega, nie stoją w sprzeczności z wizją, jaką odnośnie do amerykańskiego interesu narodowego mają elity decyzyjne.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:**

Grupy etniczne, Stany Zjednoczone, lobbing, grupy interesu, wpływ polityczny, lobby żydowskie, lobby kubańskie, lobby ormiańskie

In a modern democracy, such as the United States, the political decision-making process is extremely complex and complicated. Theoretically, reading the Constitution of the United States and some other legislative acts concerning the prerogatives of the authorities, one should be able to identify who decides on a particular matter and who is responsible for a specific policy area. In the real world, however, decisions are shaped not only by the people who are assigned to make them, but also by a great variety of actors trying to influence them in a more indirect way. The phenomenon of interest groups' influence is common in most political systems, with the intensity varying depending on the characteristics of a particular system, and it is clearly visible that the more democratic a state is, the more active organizations taking part and influencing politics can be found there. It would be extremely difficult to find such groups in totalitarian or even authoritarian systems. Interest group politics, no matter how negatively perceived it is and how many dangers it involves, is connected with citizens' participation, which is one of the pillars of the democratic state. It is obvious, however, that this phenomenon should be looked at critically and, in the interest of the health of the political system, with a certain measure of mistrust in order to neutralize the possible negative consequences of its existence. In the United States of America, a pioneering democracy, the potential problem was identified in the early days of the republic, most notably by James Madison, who in *Federalist no. 10* warned about the dangers of factions. In 1887, he wrote:

Among the numerous advantages promised by a well constructed Union, none deserves to be more accurately developed than its tendency to break and control the violence of faction. (...) By a faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community. (...) there are two methods of removing the causes of faction: the one by destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence; the other, by giving to every citizen the same opinions, the same passions, and the same interests" [*The Federalist Papers*, p. 48].

The latter is obviously impossible and the former, in Madison's opinion, highly undesirable, as in this case the remedy would be worse than the disease itself [*The Federalist Papers*, p. 49].

In modern political science, issues concerning the role of interest groups became widely present thanks to the work of Arthur Bentley, whose *Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures* [Bentley 1908] laid the grounds for the group theory of politics. In the following years, many prominent works on the subject were written. Initially, the optimistic, pluralistic vision of the interest groups system seemed to dominate the discourse, with the assumption that groups are formed as a natural reflection of interests aggregated in a society and that the formation of interest groups causes the formation of counter-groups which consequently balances the system. David Truman's *Governmental Process* [Truman 1951], and Robert Dahl's *Who Governs* [Dahl 1961] are among the key works which inspired that school of political thinking. With Mancur Olson's groundbreaking book *The Logic of Collective Action* [Olson 1971], in which the author presents the evidence supporting the assumption that people have a natural tendency to stay out of the organizations representing interests and let others bear the cost of maintaining the organization and lobbying – in Olson's words, they choose to free ride. Consequently, not all the people that have interests will organize themselves to pursue them, and therefore the system of interest representation stays out of balance. According to another prominent interest groups scholar, E.E. Schattschneider, it is evident that the tendency to organize is much more common among those who are wealthier and better educated and so, as he puts it allegorically, the "heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper-class accent" [Schattschneider 1960, p. 35]. Yet the 1970s saw numerous examples of disadvantaged groups being organized. This trend was followed by some theoretical works proving that the free rider problem mentioned by Olson can be overcome more easily than previously believed.<sup>1</sup> That gave a second wind to the formerly discredited notion of pluralism, this time not in its original version, but in the form of so-called neopluralism.<sup>2</sup> This is not to say that neopluralism became the dominant way of thinking about the

---

1 Moe, for example, suggests that Olson was wrong in assuming that an individual acts having full information about all circumstances [Moe 1980, p. 602-603]. Chong suggests that, basing his conclusions on his civil rights movement research, people are very willing to act as long as they are assured that others will act too [Chong 1991, p. 233].

2 For the concepts see [McFarland 2004].

interest group system. Still, there are many authors who see things differently using other concepts such as elitism or pluralist elitism for interpretation.

With all the theoretical differences in mind, one can notice that both in scholarly and popular discourse commentators point to the dangers resulting from interest groups' activity. Interest groups are blamed for legislative gridlock [Berry 2002, p. 333-353] or unpopular decisions made by politicians. They are criticized for destroying the common interest, if such a category even exists, and for impairing the economic efficiency of the state [Olson 1982]. The debate concerning interest groups' role in society concentrates mostly on groups perceived as typical, such as business groups, trade associations, corporations,<sup>3</sup> unions, occupational groups, and professional associations. Despite these economically focused interest groups, attention has been drawn to so-called single issue groups; that is to say, groups which pursue quite a narrowly defined interest concerning a specific political or social issue, such as the National Rifle Association, which promotes the right to own guns, the National Right to Life Committee that opposes regulations enabling abortion, and many other groups dealing with particular issues. More often than in earlier days, public interest groups (PIGs) are becoming part of the interest group landscape. This is connected with their significant proliferation since the 1970s and also with them being more effective with their lobbying efforts [Berry 1977; Berry 1993, p. 40]. Nowadays it is not easy to define a public interest group,<sup>4</sup> but we can intuitively describe them as groups pursuing the interests of a large part of society, not only the interests of their members. The best and, at the same time, least problematic examples would be consumer, environmental and good government groups. In the United States, more than anywhere else, we can find organized interests in almost every field of social life.

---

3 Corporations are often regarded interest groups although theoretically they are not groups. If several corporations form an organization representing their interest, then it can be considered a typical interest group. However, in popular discourse, but also in some scholarly works on the subject, single corporations are treated as interest groups.

4 One could argue theoretically that NRA is also a public interest group because, in their opinion, the right to own and use guns is in the interest of the society, not just the people who belong to the organization.

There are estimates indicating that there are around 22,000 interest groups active only at the federal level [Baumgartner 2005]. If we add small local and state organizations, the number might reach hundreds of thousands. Most of them do not engage in politics on a regular basis, but they have the potential to act politically and, more importantly, they influence their members' way of thinking about politics.

There are various forms of activities by which interest groups try to influence political outcomes. In general, most often these activities are described as lobbying, but it should be noted that to understand the phenomenon one should at least be aware of three different types of activities commonly referred to as lobbying. Firstly, direct lobbying, also known as traditional lobbying, where lobbyists representing groups try to persuade politicians and make them act in a particular way by providing them with various kinds of information.<sup>5</sup> Lobbyists can contact politicians during face to face meetings or, for more complicated and complex matters, use written forms of contact, such as reports, lengthy analyses or short statements. Secondly, apart from direct lobbying, interest groups, depending on their characteristics, use the techniques of indirect lobbying, which are also called grassroots or outside lobbying [Kollman 1998]. Using this tactic interest groups strategists try to influence politicians' decisions by persuading citizens to contact politicians and lobby them on some particular matter. Motivated citizens can contact politicians in various ways, e.g., writing letters, writing e-mails, signing petitions, visiting their offices, attending demonstrations, joining boycott campaigns, signaling that their election vote is going to depend on a politician's behavior, and so on. From the interest group's point of view, organizing an outside lobbying campaign requires mobilizing citizens or just group members, shaping their opinions on some particular matter and convincing them that it is essential for them to act. The lion's share of the outside lobbying campaign is thus connected with shaping public opinion. The third tactic that interest groups use to influence

---

5 Wright presents three types of information that groups "collect and disseminate information about the status and prospect of bills under active consideration; they provide information about the electoral implications of legislators' support for or opposition to those bills; and they analyze and report on the likely economic, social, or environmental consequences of proposed policies" [Wright 1996, p. 88].

politicians' minds and their decisions is electoral engagement and activity. American campaign finance laws offer a great number of opportunities for groups to contribute, mostly money, to candidates' campaigns [Corrado, Mann, Ortiz, Potter, 2005]. Some groups do that in order to help elect candidates whose political positions are close to the group's preferences. With officials thinking similarly to interest groups' members there is actually no need to lobby them. However, most groups contribute, because they want politicians to feel indebted to them. Studies confirm that there is a relationship between the amount of money that groups contribute to politicians' campaigns and the time these politicians devote to listening to their arguments [Langbein 1986]. Access is not tantamount to influence, but it is clear that the former facilitates and enables the latter. In this sense some arguments suggesting that contributions made by interest groups are forms of legitimized bribery seem pretty reasonable. The financial involvement of interest groups in electoral campaigns is definitely the most controversial and problematic part of their activity, as far as the democratic dimension is concerned.

The influence or potential influence of interest groups has become quite evident and consequently has been noticed by political scientists, journalists and citizens, with the literature on the subject growing rapidly [Thomas 2004]. During most of the twentieth century, however, this influence had mainly a domestic dimension. Foreign policy, at least in the post-war period, was or rather was seen as unaffected by internal pressures. The reason for that was the domination throughout most part of the Cold War of the Realist paradigm, both in the theory and practice of American foreign policy. The foreign policy process was almost fully determined by strategic reasons with little possibility for interest groups, even the very strong ones, to have an impact on decisions. That changed with the end of the Cold War. With the main threat – the Soviet bloc – ceasing to exist, policy alternatives, earlier limited, became significantly more numerous, and consequently foreign policy lost its obvious and unquestioned direction, namely acting to fight communism around the world. In this new situation, with no strong determinants for setting the course of foreign policy, political actors that were previously unable or even uninterested in influencing the decision-making process were provided with new opportunities. It became noticeable that the foreign

policy process had become easier to access and more open than before. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the beginning of the Global War on Terrorism changed this situation once again but only for a couple of years. The debate about how American foreign policy should be conducted flared up with great intensity again and was related to the problematic involvement in Iraq.

Apart from new possibilities there were also new incentives for interest groups to get involved in foreign policy lobbying. Globalization has made the world more interdependent and at least as far as the economy is concerned it is pretty difficult to distinguish domestic interests from those that are international. Events that take place thousands of miles away very often affect the situation in other parts of the world. For that reason today's politics more and more often is described not as domestic or international but as intermestic [Ambrosio 2002a, p. 10]. As a consequence, in political science, in response to the changing realities and environment, more attention has been paid to issues concerning the internal forces influencing foreign policy. It is evident when we look at some works on the subject, such as *The Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy* edited by J.M. McCormick [McCormick 2012b], where with each new edition (six until this day) one can notice a growing interest in factors connected with social forces and interest groups influencing decisions in the foreign policy field. These issues were introduced into a popular discourse on a larger scale after the invasion of Iraq as commentators started to ask the question in whose interest this was: the oil industry, defence industry, neocons, the Jewish lobby?

Since the 1990s more attention has been thus paid to the role of interest groups in foreign policy making. Apart from groups that could be described as typical and the most common lobbies – business groups, unions, corporations, ideological groups – the foreign policy field witnessed a growing activity of ethnic interest groups. This phenomenon was not new, though. Throughout the twentieth century there were some scholars as well as politicians pointing to the importance of ethnic groups in foreign policy. One can mention the works of Glazer and Moynihan and an important article by Senator Charles McC. Mathias Jr. There were also some studies, although not many, of particular ethnic groups' activities and their efforts to influence policy. These studies included most notably Jewish, Eastern-European, Afro-American



lobbies.<sup>6</sup> However, until the late 1980s the scale of research as well as the scale of ethnic groups' activity was not significant. It changed to some extent in the post-Cold War era with considerably more groups being active, and more studies, still for the most part case studies, being written on their activities. A vast portion of this still not so extensive literature on ethnic groups lobbying and influence is tinged with judgments criticizing groups influencing politics – like in the works of Smith, the alarming article by Huntington [Huntington 1997], Walt and Mearsheimer or, on the other side of the debate, praising the fact that ethnic groups finally have a say in foreign policy and explaining why they should have it – as in the works of Shain. There are not many studies treating the subject holistically and comparatively with the use of measurable data. The study by Paul and Anderson Paul is an exception in this regard [Paul, Anderson Paul 2009]. They provide a valuable comparison of some ethnic lobbies characteristics that can be used as a basis for further investigation.

The aim of this article is to identify factors and circumstances that may facilitate their influence by looking at the activities of various ethnic groups, their characteristics and the political outcomes they try to achieve.

The phenomenon of ethnic groups' efforts to influence the foreign policy of the United States, which became highly intensified in the 1990s, has had long history. In the nineteenth century many Irish Americans were mobilized to join the Fenian Brotherhood, an American based organization seeking independence for Ireland. Apart from the efforts to draw public and political attention to their cause, the organization was also engaged in the rather radical activities, such as organizing an invasion of some parts Canada – the British dominium at that time [see more in Somerville 2008]. The Fenians' intention was to gain control over some Canadian provinces and then to trade them for the independence of Ireland. These efforts failed but caused serious tension in American–Canadian relations. However it was not until the years of the First World War that ethnic

---

<sup>6</sup> For example a collection of articles in *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy* edited by M. Ahrari [Ahrari 1987], contains case studies of Middle East, African-American, Polish-American, Mexican-American, Cuban-American, and Irish-American. See also [Garret 1978].

groups became engaged in lobbying in an effort to shape the course of American foreign policy. German and Irish Americans attempted to persuade American public opinion and consequently American politicians that the USA should remain neutral and not participate in this European conflict. On the opposite side there were members of ethnicities – Poles, the English, Czechs, Slovaks, Armenians [Ambrosio 2002a] – that wanted USA to engage and help England and France to fight Prussia and Austria-Hungary. Later, after the United States had joined the war, some of them also lobbied the administration of Woodrow Wilson for specific solutions. As Shain writes, Woodrow Wilson's proclamation of the principle of self-determination further fuelled the political commitment of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Armenians, Albanians, and Croats. They lobbied vigorously for American recognition of and support for post-war independence and border designation of their homelands, carefully trying to blend into their campaigns the home country's agenda and the interests of the United States, and always stressing their own impeccable record as American loyalists [Shain 1999, p. 14]. Many of their demands were fulfilled, but the question remains whether it was due to their activity or due to the vision of the world that Wilson possessed. In the interwar period ethnic groups concentrated mostly on domestic issues, trying, though unsuccessfully, to prevent the U.S. government from introducing laws halting immigration and creating a very restrictive quota system. During the Second World War and, as mentioned earlier, in the Cold War period the lobbying activity of ethnic groups was limited. This is not to say that they were totally absent in political debate, but simply to point out that only the voices of groups whose interests were consistent with the strategic interests of the United States were listened to and heard. And so, it was possible to identify organizations representing American Jews seeking American support for Israel, Cuban émigré groups lobbying for a tougher American policy against the Castro regime, or Eastern European organizations, with the Polish-American Congress being most active, campaigning for a specific policy towards communist-controlled states in Europe as well as for facilitating the immigration of people trying to get to the United States from those countries.

In the 1990s more ethnic organizations became involved in politics and in many cases ethnic organizations stood against each other in

order to win favour with American foreign policy decision makers. That was the case with the post-Soviet and post-Yugoslavian countries and their diasporas. Some ethnic interest groups lost their position and significance, others had an experience that was quite the opposite, and there were new groups that were mobilized, with new states established or re-established.

With the United States being a country of immigrants, it should be possible theoretically to identify organizations representing more than a hundred ethnicities; however, most of them are small and completely not interested in politics. To discuss the role of ethnic lobbies in foreign policy making one should rather look at examples of groups that are the most active and are perceived as having the most influence. I deliberately write 'perceived as having the most influence' and not having the most influence, because influence and power are probably the most questionable political science categories that are impossible to measure. Perception of power and influence is easier to identify. This is not the same of course; however, the perception of power and influence might affect influence and power themselves by means of the mechanism of self-fulfilling prophecy. "The reputation of power is power" Hobbes wrote in his *Leviathan*,<sup>7</sup> and that very well describes what can be said about interest groups' activities. We can trace the perception of influence by examining the literature on the subject where authors—and in the case of ethnic interest groups they rather seem to agree—provide us with some intuitive classification of the most influential lobbies, or by looking into surveys like the one conducted by Paul and Anderson Paul [Paul, Anderson Paul 2009, p. 137] in which people responsible for foreign policy decision making describe which lobbies are the most influential.

By all accounts the most influential lobby is the Jewish or the Israeli one. It seems it is better to use the term Jewish as using the name Israeli would require including some groups that are not Jewish-based but pursue the interests of the state of Israel, for example Christian Zionists. They work as part of a wide pro-Israeli coalition, but because this article is about ethnic groups, they will not be considered. The basis for the Jewish organized lobby is American Jewry, and the strength of this lobby derives from American Jews' characteristics.

---

<sup>7</sup> Cited in [Fleshler 2009, p. 12].

There are 6.5 million Jews living in the United States, which constitutes 2.1% of the total population that country.<sup>8</sup> This doesn't seem to be a lot, but Jewish people are far more politically involved, with election turnout rates much higher than those of average American citizens and, what is more, their population is concentrated in politically relevant districts, some of them considered key districts.<sup>9</sup> Therefore the political clout of the American Jewish population is more considerable than its size would suggest. Jews also have a tendency to organize and work together to achieve desired goals. It is a consequence of their history and the circumstances that very often forced them to co-operate in unfriendly environments around the world. Jewish inclinations to organize make it easier to mobilize them for a lobby effort. Jewish people, despite being close to average as far as the medium household income is concerned, are very willing to contribute money to political campaigns and among them there are many very wealthy and politically conscious donors. For that reason Jewish political importance increases. The most extreme example is the 1992 presidential campaign when 60% of individual contributions given for Clinton's campaign were donated by Jewish Americans [Uslaner 2007]. Apart from individual contributions, there is an extensive network of Jewish Political Action Committees that collect money and distribute them to candidates that are supported by Jewish organizations. Jews engage in politics and contribute money to campaigns because of the belief that the stakes are high. The conviction that American support is indispensable for Israel's security and even existence is widely spread among many American Jews. Consequently, the arguments of the Jewish lobby organizations that American Jews should support their lobbying efforts are accepted. This is especially true whenever the situation in the Middle East becomes uncertain and Israel is in danger. Another part of the story is that Jewish organizations, for strategic PR reasons, try to make this situation look more uncertain and dangerous than it actually is. That

---

8 Data for 2010 based on U.S. Census Bureau Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012, p. 62. <<http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/12statab/pop.pdf>> [accessed: 11.11.2013].

9 Most of the Jews live in states: New York, California, Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts and Maryland.

is the strategy that all kinds of groups use when trying to mobilize their members and supporters. When considering the efficiency of the Jewish lobby, one has to point to the organizational dimension. At just the federal level, there are more than 400 hundred Jewish organizations [Fleshler 2009]. Only one tenth of them can be probably described as typical interest groups, and not all of them engage in foreign policy issues on a regular basis, but the potential for building a lobbying coalition when the need arises is enormous. Moreover, the biggest Jewish organizations do engage in frequently lobbying American foreign policy and for many of them it is one of their main activities. One could list here: the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith, and finally, cited as the most effective one, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). In the interest groups effectiveness rankings, AIPAC is regularly placed in the top three, and this is among all the interest groups, not just the ethnic ones.<sup>10</sup> AIPAC officially lobbies for strengthening the U.S.–Israel relationship<sup>11</sup> and is the core organization of the pro-Israeli coalition. The organization uses its resources, both financial<sup>12</sup> and human, to shape the opinions of U.S. congressmen and senators in a pro-Israeli direction. Apart from traditional lobbying techniques, namely providing politicians with relevant and valuable information and analyses, AIPAC's lobbyists concentrate on making it clear that voting in accordance with Israeli interests can help politicians win elections. AIPAC itself is not a PAC, so it cannot contribute money to the campaigns, but it is an open secret that it co-ordinates the activity of other Jewish organizations and PACs; it therefore really does have influence on who gets Jewish donations. Apart from influencing the flow of the campaign money, AIPAC, being a reliable source of information for American

---

10 For example in a 2006 National Journal Survey AIPAC was ranked as “the second most powerful lobby in the capital”. Cited in E.M. [Uslaner 2007, p. 304].

11 According to AIPAC's website its mission is “to strengthen, protect and promote the U.S. – Israel relationship in ways that enhance the security of Israel and the United States”, <<http://www.aipac.org/about/mission>> (accessed: 11.13.2013).

12 It is estimated that AIPAC's budget is between 40-60 million dollars. J.J. [Mearsheimer, Walt 2008, p. 119].

Jews, has the potential to influence Jewish electorate's voting decisions, which also adds to its perceived strength. The power of the Jewish organized lobby and especially AIPAC is traditionally derived from the fact that the Jewish community seemed to speak with one voice. That does not mean there were no differences of opinions between American Jews concerning what to lobby for, but these differences were unarticulated publicly as the consensus was reached among the main Jewish organizations that "American Jews had the right to discuss issues freely, but only within discreet forums outside public view" [Mearsheimer, Walt 2008, p. 123].

Issues that the main Jewish organizations led by AIPAC and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations lobby for include: American support for Israel, financial, military and diplomatic; setting policies towards Middle East problems, such as the Iranian nuclear program; and influencing American–Palestinian relations. The matter of the American support for Israel is rather uncontroversial among the community of Jewish groups, and it can be assumed that their representatives should be satisfied with the outcomes. Israel receives between 2-3 billion dollars annually in foreign aid plus top military technology. As far as diplomatic support is concerned, the United States on some occasions has used its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block anti-Israeli resolutions. As far as American policy towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is concerned, the unanimity among Jewish groups, once solid, has started to break. AIPAC and most of the organizations belonging to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations still promote American support for the Israeli hard-line policies towards the Palestinians. However, in the last ten years or so one can notice more and more new Jewish groups organizing to promote a more conciliatory policy towards the Palestinians, including a two-state solution. The most prominent of these initiatives is the K Street Project. Nonetheless, the conventional, more hard-line Jewish lobby is undoubtedly dominant and most American politicians think that it is AIPAC that represents the opinions of American Jews [Fleshler 2009]. Yet it is also clear that with time, given that Israel's Likud party is conducting policies that America's mostly liberal Jews find hard to accept, the lobby's unity might be broken. That could, in consequence, negatively affect the effectiveness of this lobby.

The Cuban Americans' lobby differs from that of the Jewish lobby in many respects, but the basic difference seems to be that Cubans do not lobby on behalf of their country of origin, or maybe it is more accurate to say that they do not lobby on behalf of the regime that rules their country. In the United States there are around 1.8 million people of Cuban descent.<sup>13</sup> The history of the Cuban diaspora in the United States is not long, at least when compared to that of the Jews. Cubans started coming to the United States after Fidel Castro's regime had gained control over the island. The first and most significant wave of migration lasted until the 1970s and consisted of exiles, people that were fleeing from Cuba often to save their lives. They considered themselves exiles and as such they tended to regard their presence in the United States as temporary. As a result, they only partially integrated into American society, keeping their culture and language. The second and third waves of the Cuban immigration (in the 1980s and 1990s) were different. They were mostly economic immigrants with a much lower economic status than earlier exiles, and, in contrast to the latter, they did not possess a hatred for the Castro regime. Currently in the United States the number of exiles and their descendants equals that of the second and third wave immigrants. Politically, however, exiles are much stronger and these are their opinions that dominate the discourse and influence on the public opinion. Exiles dominate the Cuban American community as far as the political and lobbying power is concerned, due to the characteristics they have. They are better educated, wealthier, more politically active than the later Cuban immigrants [Eckstein 2009, p. 90-105]. Therefore, when commentators talk about the Cuban lobby, they actually mean that of the Cuban exiles. It is important to note this because there is a difference in the goals between the two Cuban groups: the exiles and New Cuban Americans. The exiles want the United States to push the Castro regime as hard as possible whereas New Cuban Americans are much more conciliatory. Nonetheless, as they do not yet constitute a strong political force, the exiles appear to dominate the Cuban American lobbying.

---

13 <<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf>> (accessed: 07.02.2013).

When talking about the efficiency of this Cuban American lobby, one has to mention the organizational aspects. In the 1980s a very powerful Cuban American organization, modelled after Jewish AIPAC [Haney, Vanderbush 1999, p. 349], was established. The Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) soon became very efficient and was perceived as an influential player in the area of foreign policy towards Cuba. The efficiency of CANF stemmed from several reasons. Firstly, there was the personality and engagement of its founder and long-time leader, Jorge Mas Canosa. Secondly, there was the extreme anti-Castro mindset of CANF's members and supporters resulting in their financial and political commitment, and consequently American politicians' awareness of that fact. Thirdly, what was crucial for the building of its position and reputation in CANF's early days was the fact that its goals were in perfect accordance with the goals of the Reagan administration, which signalled to everyone that CANF was a real partner when it came to deciding American Cuba policy. This was, in fact, a consequence of Cold War geopolitics. Interestingly however, CANF's power survived the end of the Cold War, which may be interpreted as evidence of the lobby's efficiency. In the post Cold War period, when Cuba seemed to be no threat to the United States and when the United States was improving relations with its former enemies, some of whom remained communist, such as Vietnam, the policy towards Cuba became more hard-line. That is attributed to the ties that CANF managed to build in Congress and the fact that it made perfect use of the electoral calendar, proposing legislation at a time when presidents or presidential candidates just could not oppose them because of the importance of the Cuban American electorate, especially in key states such as Florida.

The things that CANF lobbied for included: American support for Radio and Television Marti; sustaining and tightening the embargo against Cuba – particularly the most significant regulations, such as the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, known as Helms and Burton Act; immigration policy towards Cubans; and issues concerning the limits on remittances sent by Cuban immigrants to their relatives in Cuba.<sup>14</sup>

---

14 Paradoxically CANF and other hard-lined organizations lobbied for limiting the amount of money Cuban Americans were allowed to send to



As an organization CANF was very effective until the late 1990s, but after the death of its leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, it lost momentum. His son and successor as CANF leader, Jorge Mas Santos, decided to reorient the organization on a more conciliatory course, and that caused many hard-line Cuban Americans to withdraw their support for the organization. They established a new organization – the Cuban Liberty Council (CLC) with its own new PAC which soon outshone CANF, which lost its lobbying power together with the support of the hard-liners. The CLC continued the successes of CANF, defending the achievements of the latter even during the difficult times, from the CLC's perspective, of the Obama administration.

Armenian Americans are far less numerous than the Jewish and Cuban Americans that were described above. There are about 500 thousand people who declare themselves to be of Armenian ancestry.<sup>15</sup> Politically however, the Armenian American community seems important. Armenians are statistically relatively wealthy people<sup>16</sup> with many very rich philanthropists willing to support the Armenian cause. Furthermore, Armenians are very well educated and many of them hold important public posts. Another characteristic that makes them relevant is – similar to the Cuban and Jewish cases – the fact that their population is concentrated in important districts, mostly in California. When considering their lobbying potential, what is striking is the organizational capabilities of the Armenian American community. There are tens of organizations penetrating all spheres of communal life making it easier to mobilize and inform members of the Armenian community about issues concerning the widely defined Armenian cause. According to Gregg, this organizational strength derives from the rivalry between two major Armenian American networks of organizations, one connected with the ANCA, and the other with the Armenian Assembly of America [Gregg 2002]. The

---

their relatives in Cuba, because, in their opinion, dollars sent to Cuba help the Castro regime.

15 <[http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population/ancestry\\_language\\_spoken\\_at\\_home.html](http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/population/ancestry_language_spoken_at_home.html)> (accessed: 08.10.2013).

16 With the average domestic household income of 56 thousand dollars. United States Census Bureau. <[http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_10\\_SF4\\_B19013&prodType=table](http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_SF4_B19013&prodType=table)> (accessed: 08.15.2013).

competition between these two camps has long roots, going way back to the prewar Armenia, and it intensified during the period when Armenia was part of the Soviet Union. Yet this rivalry improves the Armenians' lobbying capabilities, as it leads to, in the words of Heather Gregg, the "hypermobilization of the Armenian diaspora" [Gregg 2002, p. 2]. In contrast to the Cuban example where there is a difference on the basic lobbying issue, with hard-liners pushing for a very restrictive policy against Cuba, and other Cuban organizations having a vision of a much more conciliatory and peaceful policy, the two Armenian camps do not differ considerably on the main lobbying goals, and, even if there are slight differences in the accents put on each goal, these two organizations do not oppose each other as far as the content of lobbying is concerned. The issues that constitute the "Armenian cause" are: the American support and financial aid for Armenia, agitating for the recognition of the independence of Nagorno- Karabakh or at least torpedoing Azerbaijani diplomatic efforts to regain control over this territory, keeping American-Turkish and American-Azerbaijani cooperation on the lowest possible level, and, last but not least – and which is symbolically the most important – recognition, at least by the US authorities, of the Armenian Genocide, the mass murders committed by the Turks against over 1,5 million of Armenians during the 1915-1923 period, which Turkey officially denies.

It is very hard to say if Armenians have been successful in their lobbying efforts. This is because the goals they strive for are, taking American geopolitical interests into account, extremely difficult to achieve. Apart from financial aid to Armenia, which thanks to Armenian lobbying is very high,<sup>17</sup> all the other goals are linked with facing a very powerful coalition of counter-interests. Firstly, Azerbaijan seems to be very attractive for the American oil industry. Secondly, close cooperation between Azerbaijan and Turkey is usually desired by the American executive as they are both strategic partners in the Middle East, a region that is very unstable and unfriendly towards Americans. Thirdly, in their rivalry with the Armenians, Turkey was

---

17 Armenia is usually placed second, third or fourth as far as the per capita foreign aid is concerned.

for a long time, until the worsening of bilateral relations in 2008,<sup>18</sup> supported by Israel and its extremely powerful lobby in the United States [Ambrosio 2002b, p. 146]. That being so, one can judge that despite not having achieved their goals to the maximum degree, the results can be considered successful, especially with regard to American policy towards the above-mentioned issues concerning the Armenian cause. In 1992, as a result of support from pro-Armenian congressmen, Section 907 was added to the FREEDOM Support Act, banning American aid for Azerbaijan until it lifts its blockade of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. As to the congressional recognition of the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian lobby and its congressional friends have not managed to pass a desired resolution in the US Congress because of the robust opposition of the US administration and counter-lobby. However, on several occasions they have managed to get it through the committee stage, like in 2000, 2007 and 2010. Despite the fact that none of these Armenian Genocide resolutions passed the floor stage, as they were simply not voted on, the message got through to the media and to public opinion, raising public awareness of the event, which definitely must be regarded as a success for the Armenian lobby. Apart from these only partially successful efforts – for the reasons mentioned above – at the federal level, lobbying for the Armenian cause at the state level has proved pretty successful. Firstly, in several states, namely Louisiana, Rhode Island, Maine, and Massachusetts, state legislatures have passed resolutions supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination and independence. Secondly, legislatures of as many as 43 states recognized the events of 1915-1923 as an act of genocide. From the legal point of view these initiatives do not have any direct consequences as they are not binding, but from the symbolic and PR point of view, they matter a great deal, since they show support for the Armenian cause among American politicians and public.

Jewish, Cuban and Armenian lobbies seem to be the most active ones and are perceived as effective. Nonetheless, worthy of note are also other ethnic groups that, through their lobbying organizations, try to influence policy, but are not regarded as being as effective as

---

18 See <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/davos/7859417.stm>> (accessed: 08.06.2013).

the first three. The Indian lobby seems to be the closest to join the club of the most influential ethnic groups. With the formation of its main lobbying organization, USINPAC, in 2002, their lobbying efforts started to be co-ordinated and intensified [McCormick 2012a, p. 336-337]. The basis for the Indian lobby's success is the characteristics of its potential membership and supporters' base. There are over 3 million Indians living in the United States,<sup>19</sup> and that number is growing rapidly. American Indians are highly educated, wealthy and well connected. They also tend to contribute increasing amounts of money to political campaigns with every consecutive election cycle. Apart from the internal characteristics of the Indian community, the lobby's potential strength also derives from international realities. In the context of a growing rivalry between the United States and China, India has the potential to become a very important strategic partner in Asia. All these circumstances and characteristics make it easier for USINPAC to lobby effectively. The biggest achievement that is attributed to the activity of this lobby was the passage of the India–U.S. Nuclear Deal, a regulation that removes the restrictions concerning trade in nuclear fuels between the United States and India [McCormick 2012a, p. 336]. The lobby is also active in the field of US immigration policy towards India, working to make it easier for Indian people to come to the USA.

There are also some ethnic lobbies that used to be quite influential in the past but are no longer considered to be anymore for various reasons, and also a few that lack some of the characteristics that are needed in order to be effective. The first category is best represented by the Irish example. Once probably one of the biggest ethnic lobby forces,<sup>20</sup> it is currently weakening. In the 1990s it was actively involved, achieving some successes, in lobbying the Clinton administration to become engaged in the Northern Ireland peace process [Paul, Anderson Paul 2009, p. 43]. In 1998, one of the main Irish lobby groups, the Irish National Caucus, achieved a great success lobbying effectively for the so-called MacBride Principles [Paul, Anderson Paul 2009, p. 16]. Recently, however, there have not been many examples

---

19 <<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>> (accessed: 10.10.2013).

20 Next to Jews and Italians [Paul, Anderson Paul 2009, p. 43].

of the Irish lobby's activity. Theoretically, the Irish lobby should be very effective as it might represent over thirty million Americans of Irish descent. In reality, however, Irish people in the United States are too assimilated to feel strong bonds with the land of their fathers and mostly grandfathers. Moreover, there are not many issues to lobby on, as American-Irish relations are very good. That is why, despite being still a potential power, one does not see much of their lobbying activity. The same is true of other, mostly European immigrant groups, like Italians, Germans, and English who have large populations but actually neither have a real interest in lobbying, nor the clear sense of identity and symbolic belonging to their or their ancestors' countries of origin.

Some commentators used to mention Eastern European lobbies as being influential. During the Cold War era these lobbies played a similar role to that of the Cuban lobby. By co-operating with American administrations, these lobbies were giving a popular, as based on the opinions of ethnic Americans, support for the anti-Soviet policy. After the collapse of communism, Eastern European countries became totally independent and often competed with one another. So the name – the Eastern European lobby – fully justified in the Cold War period, became problematic. There were still some areas in which Polish, Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, and Bulgarian organizations worked together, such as the campaign for NATO expansion, but usually they worked and are still working separately. The Eastern European lobby seems to be not quite an accurate name, though. This, incidentally, signals a serious problem with terminology. In the literature on ethnic interest groups names, terms such as the Asian lobby, the Latin American lobby, or the African lobby can be found quite often. These names suggest a concurrence of interests between countries in these regions, which is somewhat questionable, though. I would argue it is much better not to use these kinds of terms and instead write about specific coalitions of interests concerning specific issues.

When considering potentially influential ethnic lobbies, one has to mention American Mexicans, especially because of the size of their population. So far they have not been very active on foreign policy issues [De La Raza 1987, p. 101-114] despite the NAFTA agreement campaign, and have focused mainly on domestic and immigration issues. However, with increasing attention paid by the Mexican

government to the Mexican diaspora [Shain 1999, p. 165-195] and the growing interdependence between Mexico and the United States, that may change. Yet Mexican Americans lack some of the characteristics that are needed in order to become an effective lobbying force. They are not politically engaged, have various visions concerning American policy towards Mexico, and many of them do not really care about their country of origin [Uslaner 2004, p. 135].

There are many more ethnic interest groups that are active in politics than those mentioned here, but it is not the aim of this paper to analyze all of them. The aim is, by looking at the most representative examples, and comparison of different groups, to assess what makes some groups effective and perceived as being influential.

It would seem that the size of the group should affect its lobbying effectiveness. This is only partly true, though. In the United States there are ethnic groups – Irish, Germans, Italians, and Mexicans – that despite their size, do not constitute a significant lobbying power. The size itself is not a determinant factor, but it would be unwise to state that it does not matter. It matters as it gives the representatives of ethnic interest groups a potential base to work with. More important than the pure size of a group, however, is the number of people who really care, as in people who feel bonds with their country of origin and who want to act to help it. This, in turn, is connected with the history of immigration and the degree of assimilation. If members of a particular ethnic group came to the United States a long time ago, they are likely to have been assimilated into the American melting pot and their bonds with the old country have weakened. That is the case with the Irish, Germans, and Italians. So, full assimilation decreases the potential for political lobbying mobilization. Some degree of assimilation is desirable, though, as immigrants who assimilate gain a better social status, which helps the group's lobbying capabilities. Cuban exiles serve as a good example in this regard. They have not become fully integrated into American society, but many of them have integrated to the degree that has enabled them to become very successful businessmen and even public officials. They have preserved their Cuban culture at home as they still see their presence in the United States as being only as temporary.

Despite the degree of assimilation in the host country and attachment to their countries of origin, there is one more factor that

determines the real size of the ethnic population that interest organizations can mobilize for lobbying; that is, the existence of an enemy or a danger that threatens their home country. The more serious the situation is in the country of origin, the more obliged people feel to help it. The Jews and Armenians are excellent examples in this regard. Both countries – Israel and Armenia – are believed to be under threat. That unites their diasporas and makes them committed. Additionally, in both cases historical trauma exists: the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide respectively. Apart from uniting and creating a symbolic relation to the idea of the nation, this trauma activates the people under the “never again” motto. That is why interest organizations when mobilizing their potential supporters often use a very dramatic rhetoric and references to the tragic history. The Cuban example, even though a little different, also shares this feature. Cuban exiles see a threat – in this case, the Castro regime – and although it is not an external threat like in the cases of Israel and Armenia, it is still a threat to their country. There is also a historical trauma here – the Cuban revolution. All these circumstances influence how the size of the ethnic population translates into the size of a motivated lobbying ethnic community.

Mere size is just a starting point. Lobbying potential is derived from the number of people for whom the issue, and in the case of an ethnic group the situation of their old country, is of a great importance. It is also connected with the characteristics of these people, since lobbying is about the strategic use of different kinds of resources, and what resources depend on are the people who supply them. As mentioned earlier, the political influence of interest organizations can be enhanced by means of direct lobbying, grass-roots lobbying and involvement in an electoral campaign. All these three activities require money and human power. Therefore it is important to what extent members of an ethnic community are able to supply their lobbying organizations with these resources. Consequently, the wealthier, better educated and politically active members of a particular ethnic group are, the stronger the lobbying structure representing their interests will be. It is not a coincidence that ethnic groups ranked as the most influential spend the most money on lobbying and contributing to candidates [Paul, Anderson Paul 2009, p. 72, 73, 75-77]. The social status characteristics of the ethnic community members

partly explain the success of the Jewish, Armenian, Cuban-exile and Indian groups.

Apart from money which is indispensable for direct lobbying and the electoral involvement of interest groups, a grass-roots structure, especially in the case of ethnic groups, matters. With the use of their grass-roots, ethnic groups can signal to politicians how important the issue is for them and what position a particular politician should take if they want to win ethnic votes. Because of this electoral connection, ethnic interest groups whose many members or supporters live in a particular congressional district have a clear advantage. A candidate who wants to be elected from Florida is highly unlikely to support a policy of lifting the Cuban embargo. Concentration of the ethnic population in particular areas is thus another important factor enhancing the effectiveness of ethnic lobbying groups. The most effective groups build long lasting ties with members of Congress that are elected in "their" districts. These congressmen and senators often become the challengers of the group's case, which in congressional realities, where legislative propositions often get stuck in a procedural maze, is crucial. The impact of the electoral connection between ethnic groups is much more evident with congressional rather than presidential elections, but even in the latter case, in key states, ethnic politics matters, as it did with the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992 or the Helm-Burton Act of 1996. When comparing ethnic interest groups to other kinds of interest organizations, it is noticeable that this electoral connection appears stronger. When compared to other groups, ethnic interest groups do not use much financial resources, with the possible exception of the Jewish groups. Their political impact results from their ability to mobilize their members and supporters to put a psychological pressure on politicians being afraid to lose ethnic votes.

When looking at the examples of the most effective ethnic groups, such as Jews, Armenians, Cuban exiles, and comparing them to the ones that are not perceived as being that effective – Mexicans, Arabs – one can see that the organizational structures, unity, and clearly defined goals also make a difference. Jews and Armenians have well developed networks of organizations that organize their communal life, mobilize them for action and work to shape general public opinion. Members of these communities also seem to agree on the basic



lobbying goals, at least in public, and that gives politicians a clear message. In contrast, Mexicans and Arabs are not effectively organized and, what is more, one can often hear a polyphony of opinions.

Apart from the above-mentioned internal characteristics of ethnic groups that make them more or less effective, there are also circumstances connected with the state of the political system as well as the present political constellation and context. As seen in the Armenian example, despite well structured grass-roots and direct lobbying apparatus, the sympathy of general public opinion and the majority of congressmen, what prevents them from being more effective is the presence of strong opposition of interests. So the effectiveness of an interest group is determined by other players who are active in this particular field. Sometimes these are other ethnic groups, like in the Arab-Jewish, Armenian-Turkish, Indian-Pakistani rivalry examples. Sometimes, other kinds of interest groups that have an interest in some specific policy, e.g., oil companies confronting the Armenian lobby in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

Definitely, the most important determinant of the potential ethnic group's influence is the congruence of interests between its goals and the strategic interests of the United States [Ahrari 1987, p. 156]. From a theoretical point of view, this circumstance, however, is the most problematic and least measurable. Analyzing the influence of ethnic interest groups in this context requires defining the national interest of the United States. Interest groups always stress that the goals they lobby for are not only in the interest of their country of origin but, predominantly, in the interest of the United States. This is their narrative of course, but one can always argue against this. The Jewish and Israel case serves as a good example of this problem. One of the strongest arguments that the representatives of Jewish organizations use, when lobbying for enhancing US support for Israel, is that Israel is a strategic ally in the hostile and anti-American region of the Middle East. Therefore supporting Israel equals protecting American interests in this region. One may argue, however, that perhaps the Middle East region is anti-American because of American support for Israel, and some even claim that without close Israeli-American relations there would not be anti-American terrorism. It is impossible to say which version holds more truth, and that is why it is difficult to talk about the national interest. Maybe it is more accurate to say

that it is the congruence between the group's interests and the decision makers' vision of the national interest that matters. In the area of foreign policy, the executive is mostly responsible for decision making, and it is the executive that sets the course of foreign policy. So the framework within which the ethnic interest groups work is shaped by the policy vision of the President. It is very unlikely that a group can reach goals that are in conflict with the vision of the administration. This probability increases when the vision of the administration is not clear and decision-makers are not determined. Our two examples illustrate this. In the case of Armenian lobbying for the genocide resolution, the executive, no matter who was president, categorically torpedoed the attempts persuading legislators not to put it under the vote. That was because the partnership with Turkey is perceived as being strategic and important for the American national interest. In the case of Cuban Americans and the issue of the embargo, the situation is a little different. It is hard to justify that keeping the embargo is in the American national interest. After the Cold War Cuba does not pose a threat to the United States anymore and, what is more, as history has shown, this embargo simply does not work. Lifting or loosening the embargo would bring positive results for the American economy, in that trade would increase and a possibility for American investors would appear in Cuba. If it was to be an autonomous decision of the executive, without any pressures, the embargo would in all probability be lifted. From the administration's perspective, however, improving relations with Cuba is not as important as cultivating good relations with Turkey. Pressing hard a very pro-Cuban Congress to lift the embargo would probably result in some kind of conflict or at least tension, and with the stakes not being very high, it would not be politically rational. This is also relevant to the electoral situation. The president's initiative to lift the embargo could cost the president hundreds of thousands of votes in Florida, and since presidential races in Florida are always very close, that is a tremendous risk in return for very little gain. It is important to note that when considering the congruence of interests as an influence factor, one has to look not only at preferences but also at their intensity.

When considering the preferences and their congruence it is also worth noting that not only politicians' preferences and group's

preferences are important. The success of a group and its lobbying campaign is also to a considerable extent influenced by general public opinion within which politicians operate. For example, American public opinion is quite pro-Jewish and rather anti-Arab (because of the perceived connections with the Islamic terrorism) [Uslaner 2004, p. 131], so when politicians act in a pro-Jewish direction, it is not necessarily because they want to flatter American Jews or the Jewish lobby, but possibly because they act in accordance with the general preferences of the public. That is why it is so important from the ethnic interest group's point of view to shape public opinion in relation to the issues of the group's concern. This is exactly what the representatives of the Jewish organizations do when they provide the media with information about what is going on in the Middle East and also when they increase public consciousness about the Holocaust, which, among many other effects, increases the public's sympathy for the Jews and their fate. Armenians, by creating the Armenian National Institute and establishing the Armenian Genocide Museum in the centre of Washington D.C., try to raise public awareness of what happened to their nation and in this way create more favourable climate for lobbying.

Finally, the influence of ethnic interest groups and their potential lobbying effectiveness depends on a particular matter, and, more precisely, on whether these are the executive's or congressional prerogatives to decide on the matter. It is much more difficult for interest groups, not just the ethnic ones, to lobby the president and his closest circle than congressmen and senators. One of the main reasons for this is that the electoral connection is much weaker in presidential campaigns. If the group is strong in their electoral district, congressmen must take the group's opinions into account. Consequently, ethnic groups will exercise more influence in Congress than in the executive branch. Their influence is, though, mainly limited to the issues decided by the legislative branch, and in the case of the foreign policy these are not considered to be particularly important. That is why it is easier for groups to lobby on the issues relating to, e.g., foreign aid, some aspects of trade policy, and immigration issues than those concerning the directions of the American foreign policy. Therefore, the fact that foreign policy is mostly conducted by the executive limits the potential for ethnic groups' influence in the process.

From this point of view, ethnic interest groups are not predestined to exercise as much influence as those interest groups dealing with domestic issues. Having said that, one must also acknowledge that in some circumstances ethnic groups may have some advantages resulting from a character of the field they operate in. When compared to groups operating domestically, where competition is enormous, ethnic groups very often lobby for issues in which there is no counter-lobby on the opposite side.

Bearing in mind that there are factors limiting influence, it is hard to disagree with the opinion that ethnic groups, although not all of them and not all the time, do have some influence. The degree of this influence is connected with the factors that were identified in this article, namely: the size of an ethnic community but more importantly its effective size; in other words, the number of people who care about the interests of their country of origin, the concentration of the ethnic population, the assimilation degree and ethnic identity, immigration history and the reasons to come to the United States, the socio-economic status of the members of the group, the level of political participation and the voting turnout among the group's members, financial resources that can be used for direct lobbying and for electoral contributions, the degree of unity of opinions within the group so the group can speak publicly with one voice, the organizational structure within the ethnic group, the diaspora's attitude towards the country of origin and vice versa, what the general public thinks about the group and its goals, the presence or absence of a counter-lobby, the character of relations between the United States and the group's country of origin, the decision-makers' perception of the American national interest concerning the specific issue, and the salience of the issue.

These are the factors that determine the probability of ethnic groups' lobbying success. However, it should be emphasized once more that it is not legitimate to say with certainty that a particular group influences a particular policy to a particular degree. There seems to be too many factors, too many actors, to evaluate the impact of lobbying. One can try to conduct an experimental study as Redd and Rubenzer [Redd, Rubenzer 2005] did, but with so many variables to control and the specificity of the foreign policy decision-making process, the results may be questionable. In reality there are many

forces that affect the decision-making process – the executive, non-ethnic interest groups and in comparison to them, the influence of ethnic groups does not seem to be significant. It seems that talking about their real influence would be in the following scenario: a group lobbies actively, the political result is close to the group's preferences, the political result does not correspond to the preferences of political actors responsible for conducting the foreign policy. As far as ethnic influence is concerned, we can quote examples of such events. In 1972, Jewish organizations were able to persuade US Congress, despite Nixon's opposition, to enact Jackson–Vanik amendment influencing American–Soviet relations. The Cuban-exile lobby succeeded with the Helms-Burton Act despite Clinton's negative attitude towards it, and the threat of serious international repercussions and worsening relations with important partners, such as the European Union. Armenians were partly successful with their Armenian Genocide resolution that, although not passed, came through the committee stage several times, causing severe tension in American–Turkish relations. There are not many of such examples, but they bear testimony to groups' effectiveness. More numerous are examples of situations when the policy satisfies a group, but the policy was also supported by the main foreign policy decision makers, usually the executive, and in accordance with widely accepted American interests. Closer cooperation between the United States and India would be an example in this regard. This is definitely something that the Indian lobby (USINPAC) has pressed for, but as it is also in the interest of the United States, it is impossible to evaluate what the impact the Indian lobby has had. We can assume that the activity of this lobby increases the pace of work on particular regulations and facilitates the whole process.

All this makes the debate about the influence of ethnic interest organizations very problematic. This paper was designed to point to the factors that can enhance or decrease the effectiveness and consequently the influence of ethnic groups. Other elements of the debate about the ethnic groups' influence that were only hinted here are far more controversial and much less suitable for rational scholarly research. They concentrate around two basic problems. The first one: how influential are ethnic interest groups? And the second one: assuming they are influential, is this good or bad? And, how can

their influence be justified? These questions are still waiting to be answered.

#### REFERENCES

- Ahrari, M., 1987, *Cocclusions*, in: Ahrari, M. (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Greenwood Press, New York.
- Ambrosio, T., 2002a, *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, in: Ambrosio, T. (ed.), *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Praeger, Westport.
- Ambrosio, T., 2002b, *Entangling Alliances: The Turkish-Israeli Lobbying Partnership and Its Unintended Consequences*, in: Ambrosio, T. (ed.), *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Praeger, Westport.
- Baumgartner F. R., *The Growth and Diversity of U.S. Associations 1956-2004: Analyzing Trends Using the Encyclopedia of Associations*. Working Paper, March 29, 2005.
- Bentley, A., 1908, *The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Berry, J., 1977, *Lobbying for the People: The Political Behavior of Public Interest Groups*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Berry, J., 1993, *Citizen Groups and the Changing Nature of Interest Group Politics in America*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 528, Citizens, Protest, and Democracy.
- Berry, J., 2002, *Interest Groups and Gridlock*, in: Cigler, A., Loomis, B., *Interest Group Politics*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed., CQ Press, Washington D.C.
- Chong, D., 1991, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movements*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Corrado, A., Mann, T.E., Ortiz, D.R., Potter, T., 2005, *The New Campaign Finance Sourcebook*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C.
- Dahl, R.A., 1961, *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in American City*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- De La Raza, R.O., 1987, *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Mexican-American Political Agenda*, in: Ahrari, M. (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Greenwood Press, New York.
- Eckstein, S.E., 2009, *The Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the US and Their Homeland*, Routledge, New York.
- The Federalist Papers*, 2005, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis.
- Fleshler, D., 2009, *Transforming America's Israel Lobby: The Limits of Its Power and the Potential for Change*, Potomac Books, Washington D.C.
- Garret, S.A., 1978, *Eastern European Groups and American Foreign Policy*, "Political Science Quarterly", vol. 93, no. 2.

- Gregg, H.S., 2002, *Divided They Conquer: The Success of Armenian Ethnic Lobbies in the US*, the Rosemary Rogers Working Paper Series.
- Haney, P.J, Vanderbush, W., 1999, *The Role of Ethnic Interest Groups in U.S. Foreign Policy: The Case of the Cuban American National Foundation*, "International Studies Quarterly", vol. 43, no. 2.
- Huntington, S.P., 1997, *The Erosion of American National Interests*, "Foreign Affairs", vol. 76, no. 5.
- Kollman K., 1998, *Outside Lobbying: Public Opinion and Interest Groups Strategies*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Langbein, L.I., 1986, *Money and Access: Some Empirical Evidence*, "Journal of Politics" 48.
- McCormick, J.M., 2012a, *Ethnic Interest Groups and American Foreign Policy: A Growing Influence?*, in: Cigler, A.J., Loomis, B.A. (eds.), *Interest Group Politics 8<sup>th</sup> ed.*, CQ Press, Washington D.C.
- McCormick, J.M. (ed.), 2012b, *Domestic Sources of American Foreign Policy: Insights and Evidence 6<sup>th</sup> ed.*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham.
- McFarland, A., 2004, *Neopluralism: The Evolution of Political Process Theory*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence.
- Mearsheimer, J.J., Walt, S.M., 2008, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, Penguin Books, London.
- Moe T.M., 1980, *A Calculus of Group Membership*, "American Journal of Political Science", vol. 24, no. 4.
- Olson, M., 1971, *The Logic of Collective Action, Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Olson, M., 1982, *The Rise and decline of nations: economic growth, stagflation, and social rigidities*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Paul, D.M., Anderson Paul, R., 2009, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder.
- Redd, S.B., Rubenzer, T.P., 2005, *Ethnic Minority Interest Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy: An Experimental Study*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of The Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.
- Schattschneider, E.E., 1960, *The Semisovereign People: Realist's View of Democracy in America*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.
- Shain, Y., 1999, *Marketing the American Creed Abroad: Diasporas in the U.S. and Their Homelands*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Somerville, A., 2008, *Narrative of the Fenian Invasion of Canada*, BiblioBazaar, Charleston.
- Thomas, C.S. (ed.), 2004, *Research Guide to U.S. and International Interest Groups*, Praeger, Westport.
- Truman, D.B., 1951, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

- Uslaner, E.M., 2004, *All Politics Are Global: Interest Groups and the Making of Foreign Policy*, in: Wilson E.J. III (ed.), *Diversity and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Routledge, New York.
- Uslaner, E.M., 2007, *American Interests in the Balance?: Do Ethnic Groups Dominate Foreign Policy Making*, in: Cigler, A.J., Loomis B.A. (eds.), *Interest Group Politics* 7<sup>th</sup> ed., CQ Press, Washington D.C.
- Wright J.R., 1996, *Interest Groups and Congress: Lobbying, Contributions, and Influence*, Allyn and Bacon, Upper Sadle River.