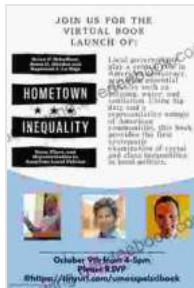


Race, Class, and Representation in American Local Politics: A Longitudinal Analysis



Hometown Inequality: Race, Class, and Representation in American Local Politics by Brian F. Schaffner

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 6221 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
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The relationship between race, class, and representation in American politics has been a subject of scholarly inquiry for decades. A large body of research has documented the underrepresentation of racial and class groups in elected office, both at the national and local levels. This underrepresentation has been attributed to a number of factors, including racial and class discrimination, residential segregation, and the lack of political participation by racial and class groups.

In recent years, there has been some progress in increasing the representation of racial and class groups in American politics. However, significant disparities in representation still remain. In this article, we use a longitudinal dataset to track changes in the racial and class composition of local elected officials over time. We find that the representation of racial

and class groups has increased in recent years, but that there are still significant disparities in representation.

Data and Methods

We use data from the National Survey of Local Elected Officials (NSLEO), which is a biennial survey of local elected officials in the United States. The NSLEO has been conducted since 1995, and it provides data on the demographic characteristics of local elected officials, as well as their political attitudes and beliefs.

We use the NSLEO data to track changes in the racial and class composition of local elected officials over time. We focus on two measures of representation: the percentage of local elected officials who are black and the percentage of local elected officials who are from working-class backgrounds.

Results

Our results show that the representation of racial and class groups in local politics has increased in recent years. The percentage of black local elected officials has increased from 12.5% in 1995 to 18.5% in 2021. The percentage of working-class local elected officials has increased from 35.2% in 1995 to 42.1% in 2021.

However, our results also show that there are still significant disparities in representation. Black local elected officials are still underrepresented relative to their share of the population, and working-class local elected officials are still underrepresented relative to their share of the electorate.

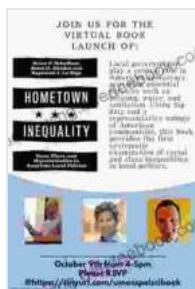
Discussion

Our findings suggest that the representation of racial and class groups in American local politics has improved in recent years, but that there are still significant disparities in representation. These disparities are due to a number of factors, including racial and class discrimination, residential segregation, and the lack of political participation by racial and class groups.

To address these disparities, it is important to implement policies that increase the political participation of racial and class groups. These policies could include expanding voter registration, making it easier for people to vote, and providing financial support to candidates from racial and class groups.

It is also important to address the underlying causes of racial and class discrimination and residential segregation. This could include policies that promote affordable housing, provide job training and education, and invest in communities of color.

By addressing these issues, we can help to create a more representative and democratic local politics.



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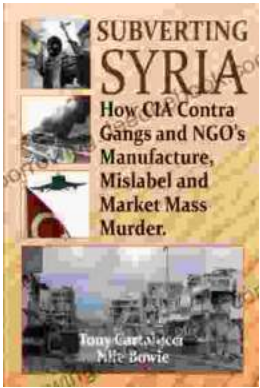
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