

Review of: "Diversity in U.S. Governments 1901-2021"

Milton Arrieta-López¹

¹ Oakton Community College

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Christian Etzrodt's study on diversity in U.S. governments from 1901 to 2021 provides a comprehensive analysis of the representation of marginalized groups in administrations over this time period. Using an innovative methodology, Etzrodt assigns influence values to various government positions based on their relative importance within each administration and then calculates the representation of women, Catholics, Jews, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other races. From this dataset, the author estimates a relative influence value for each group, which is then divided by the group's percentage in the total U.S. population to produce a measurement of over- or underrepresentation over time.

One of the most striking findings of the research is the clear marginalization of women, who were consistently underrepresented in U.S. governments throughout the 120-year period analyzed. Despite making up a significant portion of the population, women never achieved proportional representation in the most influential roles. Although some minority groups, such as Catholics and African-Americans, saw improvements in representation during the second half of the 20th century, these gains were still insufficient when compared to their population size.

On the other hand, the study reveals that Jews were the only group to consistently exceed their population proportion, particularly after 1969, and achieved significant overrepresentation during several administrations. However, this trend was not mirrored by other minority groups. Hispanics, while gaining some visibility in recent decades, never achieved proportional representation relative to their demographic growth. Meanwhile, Asian-Americans made their first notable inroads into government only during Bill Clinton's second term.

A key strength of this analysis lies in the rigorous methodology employed, which assigns varying influence values to different positions according to their actual power in shaping policy. This approach avoids the simplistic assumption that the mere presence of a minority group member in government signals genuine inclusion. Etzrodt's focus on the relative importance of different positions is crucial to demonstrating that, while marginalized groups may occupy lower-level roles, the most influential positions continue to be dominated by white Protestant men.

The study also highlights the evolution of government composition over time, showing that Democratic administrations have generally been more diverse than Republican ones, particularly from 1969 onward. Nevertheless, this progress has not been enough to correct historical disparities in the representation of women and other large minority groups, such as Hispanics.

Regarding the representation of women, the study concludes that despite some advances, their influence in U.S. government has consistently fallen short of what would be expected based on their population size. This persistent

underrepresentation is partly due to the tendency to appoint women to less politically influential roles, perpetuating their marginalization even in a context of increasing diversity.

Etzrodt's work is a significant contribution to the debate on political representation and diversity within power structures. By employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the author not only exposes the persistent inequalities but also offers a valuable methodological framework for future studies in other democratic contexts. The publication of this study would provide a rigorous and much-needed analysis of how the inclusion of minorities in political power has historically unfolded in the United States.