



Electoral Politics Is Not Enough: Racial And Ethnic Minorities And Urban Politics (Sunny Series in African American Studies; Sunny Series in Urban Public Policy)

Peter F. Burns

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Examines how and why government leaders understand and respond to African Americans and Latinos in northeastern cities with strong political traditions.

Focusing on four medium-sized northeastern cities with strong political traditions, *Electoral Politics Is Not Enough* analyzes conditions under which white leaders respond to and understand minority interests. Peter F. Burns argues that conventional explanations, including the size of the minority electorate, the socioeconomic status of the citizenry, and the percentage of minority elected officials do not account for variations in white leaders' understanding of and receptiveness toward African American and Latino interests. Drawing upon interviews with more than 200 white and minority local leaders, and through analysis of local education and public safety policies, he finds that unconventional channels, namely neighborhood groups and community-based organizations, strongly influence the representation of minority interests.

"...*Electoral Politics Is Not Enough* is a tour de force that should be read by scholars and practitioners alike who are interested in urban and/or minority politics ... it sheds new light on the well-traveled ground of urban politics and provides innovative building blocks for advancing a deeper understanding of the complex relationships among race, place, and representation in America." — *Perspectives on Politics*

"The title of Peter Burns's thoughtful and detailed study accurately signals his thesis. Blacks and Latinos increase city government responsiveness to their concerns primarily through 'unconventional resources'—dominantly strong community organizations—rather than through electoral mobilization and representation." — *Political Science Quarterly*

"The great strength of this book is its thorough ground-level knowledge of the politics of these major New England cities. This book represents an impressive amount of field investigation and will almost certainly find a captivated audience among those who study minority and ethnic politics, as well as urban politics." — James G. Gimpel, coauthor of *Cultivating Democracy: Civic Environments and Political Socialization in America*

"Much of what we know about African American and Latino politics is based on research in large American cities. This book is one of the few that speaks to minority politics within the context of medium-sized cities, and its comparative focus is especially commendable. *Electoral Politics Is Not Enough* adds to our understanding of minority representation and will be useful for those interested in urban politics, public policy, community organizing, and African American and Latino politics. It simply has no rival." — Marion Orr, author of *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore, 1986–1998*

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