

2019 NCSBN Leadership and Public Policy Conference - Identification, Mobilization, and Political Activism Video Transcript

©2019 National Council of State Boards of Nursing, Inc.

Event

2019 NCSBN Leadership anQ6hi7p a210 1 364.15 643.7 Tm00hLoW*n0 792 re4.231 364.15 643.7 Tm00hLoW*n0

A couple of things to keep in mind about identification. It's not necessarily 24/7. Think about some of the ways in which you identify as a parent, as a man, as a woman, as a person of a certain race or ethnicity. Some of those identifications are immutable and are 24/7.

Some are not. So, sometimes we identify in a certain way, and then we choose to not identify in that way. Sometimes we identify, say, as an environmentalist, but that doesn't mean that we're identifying as an environmentalist 24/7 and that it's immutable.

And so identification is not always immutable. My wife, I think, would be the environmentalist 24/7. Okay. Identification is also multifaceted. Very very few of us would ever, it's hard to imagine any of us ever being identified by one factor, by one feature.

And the term that is sometimes used is "intersectionality." This is a term that was first used, first introduced to the social sciences by individuals who were studying the effects of being, or the sense that some of the...yeah, I'll say the effects of being African-American and female.

And so there's the intersectionality, okay? So it's not just being female, it's not just being African-American, it's being an African-American female. And that puts individuals in a slightly different situation. But all of us have multiple attributes.

All of us identify in multiple ways. So let's flesh this out a little bit. I do teach political science. I have to talk a little bit about elections. Go back almost 25 years, we have the election in 1996 presidential election.

As you no doubt recall, President Clinton defeated Bob Dole. But more importantly, a catchphrase was born. And this is a catchphrase that I don't usually use but I thought I might be able to use it today. It's a catchphrase that helps us understand identification, and that is "Soccer Moms."

So, if you followed the 1996 election, there were some individuals who suggested that soccer moms came out in support for Bill Clinton and that they were a driving force in that election. So, what do we have up? I used to have this on an animation.

So, this was the first slide, so we'll go counterclockwise. So what do we mean by a soccer mom? Well, it might mean that you play soccer with children. That would be this image. You are a soccer mom. You're playing soccer with, ostensibly, your own children. It might mean you're a chauffeur, right?

I'm not sure the mom is even in the front seat there, but somebody is driving that minivan. So, you might be a soccer mom but really, you're just a chauffeur. And probably a chauffeur for some of your children and other children as well. Or you might somehow separate yourself from from children, from chauffeuring, You might separate yourself from the soccer ball there.

I don't know if anyone's ever used this sort of mosquito netting. We have a lot of mosquitoes here in Georgia, so if it works, please let me know. But what we mean by a soccer mom can be very different. And how individuals view soccer moms... The car dealer views the soccer mom as a great potential purchaser of an SUV or minivan, right?

Some have to identify and mobilize. So the third individual had to identify and mobilize, okay? Some individuals have identification defined for them, right? It's already defined for them and it is, in a sense, making the marginal cost of mobilization, therefore, a little bit lower.

So, all of this ties into political activism. You have to be sensitive to the cost that people bear when they engage in political activity. And the one thing that I want to drive home today, in this first part of the talk, is that there are identification costs, there are mobilization costs, and those are different for people involved in the same political activism, involved in the same political mobilization.

And this is the case, not just in that march in Memphis, just off of Beale Street. In the early 1900's, a committee of 12 was a group of individuals who were concerned about the plights of African-Americans and it included folks such as Booker T.

Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. It also included a large number, a majority actually, of white citizens who were concerned about this transitional period. The committee of 12 though, even that committee of 12...which then broke off, we had Washington breaking off into one field, he was more interested in economic progress, and DuBois who was more interested in political representation.

That split creates a split between the Committee of Twelve and the Niagara Movement, which was DuBois' movement. The Niagara Movement then begins to merge with a nascent, an emerging organization called the NAACP. But in the Committee of Twelve and in the NAACP there were partners.

It was not just DuBois. it was not just Booker T. Washington. And the group most closely tied to Booker T. Washington would be the be the Urban League today. Okay. So what about political activism?

How do we understand political activism? Well, there's substantial costs to identification. There are, or there can be. So what that means is that identification is not guaranteed. No one is guaranteed to identify, to come out and identify with one political movement or another.

And so we need to keep that in mind. There can be substantial costs to mobilization. Even if I identify, I might not choose to mobilize. So mobilization is not guaranteed. And this is among your supporters.

This is among the people with whom you see eye-to-eye. They still might not identify. They still might not mobilize. So, suppose we wanted to pursue some policies related to advanced-practice nurses. I get the impression that that might be something of interest to folks in this audience.

Or other issues related to the National Council. What we'd want to do then is we'd want to think about how people identify. So do the APNs, do the advanced- practice nurses, do they identify as health advocates?

I see some nods, "Yeah, I'm a bit of a regulator." A Healthcare professional, a health professional, healthcare coordinator, there are any number of ways in which you could or one could identify, either as a member of the National Council or as an advanced-practice nurse. And so, the thing to keep in mind is, to the extent that you have control over that identification, you want to craft that identification to work for you.

How should we view our multifaceted jobs, our very complex jobs? How should we view that, okay? How do we want to identify? Is that identification immutable? So, many of you are nurses. If you're a nurse, are you a nurse 24/7?

Is it immutable? Is it 24/7? Is it without any alteration across the day or over the years? So, what is required for successful political activism? So there are all sorts of studies related to, in the social sciences, related to collective action problems.

And some of these studies are very empirically-oriented, some of these studies involve very interesting models of strategic interaction, mathematical models of strategic interactions. But the main thing to keep in mind with any collective action problem is that individuals are in a position to enjoy the benefits, to reap the rewards of successful collective action, even if they don't engage.

Even if they don't engage. And so, that allows individuals, to use the standard phrase, "To freeride."

Another thing for successful political activism, geography. Let's think about the AMA example. So the American Medical Association contacts the physicians of these elected officials and gets them to engage in some lobbying efforts.

That means that they're able to reach every congressional district. They're able to reach every state. Geography has an interesting politica

Something is at hand, right? So, there's something urgent or some immediacy. This is something that needs to be addressed right away. And then also the possibility of loss. There's some evidence to suggest that we are easier to mobilize when we fear a loss.

And it's harder to mobilize individuals for a potential gain. So, if you're protecting against a loss, then it's easier to mobilize people. If you're promising some sort of benefit, some sort of gain, then it's generally been harder to mobilize people.

It also requires successful lobbying. So, what do we mean by "Successful lobbying?" What do we need for that? Well, this is actually the area of political science that I would spend the most of my research effort on, and in a sense, the least amount of this talk.

But successful lobbying, you need to understand the institutional context and the personal context. And so both of those come into play. But you cannot simply glad-hand your way through political activism. There are real Institutional constraints that the friendliest of regulators, the friendliest of bureaucrats, the friendliest of elected officials have.

And so glad-handing doesn't do it. That doesn't mean that you should not engage in some everyday pleasantries, right? Lobbyists engage in everyday pleasantries for the same reason that we do.

We kind of like being pleasant rather than being ugly all the time, right? That doesn't do us any good. And so, there's nothing special when a lobbyist says, "Oh, it's all about personal relations," right? That's what makes my business a business. You could ask any business person, "What makes your business so successful?"

and that person would say, "it's all about relations. It's all about relations." You could ask a family member, "What makes your family so successful?" "Well, it's the relations. We talk to one another," right? We sit down and we discuss things. And so there's nothing as important as that personal touch is, as important as that personal connection is.

There's nothing that makes it more important for lobbying and less important for anywhere else in our lives. And so we need to think about institutional contexts pretty carefully. In terms of legislative contacts, a couple of things to keep in mind. One is that legislative efforts are going to be much more public and they're usually going to engage in more sweeping activities, more broad activities, okay?

So, do you want to engage in a public activity or do you want to be under the radar? Do you want to take on a big sweeping change or do you want a more minor change? The other thing to keep in mind, or a couple of other things, I should say, to keep in mind about a legislative institutional context is that you have a committee system.

And that committee system is going to affect the flow of legislation. It's going to affect your progress. You also have, in many states, and at the federal, an authorization cycle. So there's a certain cycle, a certain cycle to certain policy areas. So that there's an authorization cycle for the federal government, Every six to seven years, there's a major transportation policy.

Okay. So, in conclusion, a couple of things to keep in mind. There's nothing automatic about identification. There's nothing automatic about mobilization. They can be costly, and that means that there's nothing automatic about successful political activism.

And you need to keep in mind that political activism, you're going to be making claims upon others, maybe large claims, maybe important claims, maybe small claims, but you're going to be making claims upon others, one way or another. And there are going to be costs that you bear, and that your supporters

But I did think it was very interesting because I wasn't thinking of the decades-long impact here, since I'm a little on the younger side, and how that identification could have negatively impacted, you know, any changes that I wanted to see, etc.

- So, I mean that is an ongoing struggle, right? The sense that words have a history. They have a meaning that was established over years and years of use. And then, we come along, and we start to use some of those same words.

We use some of that same language. And, you know, to what extent should we, you know, bear the cost of that or not, I'm not sure I can answer that. But I will say that, yes, the ways in which we identify and the words that we use to identify, they do have historic grounding. And so, for the feminists, I'm not the best person to answer questions about feminism, but there were three waves of feminism and they stressed different attributes or different challenges of being a female in society today.

And so, they had different nuances. And I think now there's some argument that we're in the fourth wave of feminism. And so it can mean different things. But, you know, do you want to have to read Betty

affect? Who are the individuals whose lives you're trying to improve, right? And that becomes very important.

And this is a dicey area for everybody but I imagine it would be a dicey issue in the health field because insurance companies like to see costs go down. And healthcare providers are in that mix, right? You're providing healthcare.

And so when is a policy focused on patients? When is a policy focused on insurance companies? That's something that you have to kind of work to define and define it in as favorable a way as possible.

I think it is possible, for instance, that, you know, you do create policies where all of the interested parties are able to gain. And those are the sorts of policies that are most important to implement. I'm not

- Yes. Sharon's comment, the sexualization of nursing. It's not as flagrant in the United States anymore but in Latin American countries it's still very flagrant. And as a side note, I'm originally from Connecticut but I'm in Vermont now, but originally from Connecticut, and there is a craft-beer company that developed a beer that's called "Naughty Nurse."

And I refuse and I have written to the company about, you know, that type of image for nursing, and