Constituents' Responses to Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress

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Abstract: Previous research suggests descriptive representatives may be less accountable for substantive representation, due to voters overestimating the degree of policy congruence between them or downplaying its importance in their evaluations. Using a unique survey sample and experiment that manipulates the race and policy positions of a fictitious legislator, I show that descriptive representation shapes responses to substantive representation in significant but limited ways. Regardless of their actual record, Black voters perceive greater congruence with Black legislators, and White voters approve more strongly of White legislators. These effects are moderated somewhat by both the education and ideological leanings of the respondent. Being represented by someone of the same race can diminish accountability for legislators' substantive records, an important cost of descriptive representation.

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Standard models of democratic accountability assume that voters know how their representatives have acted in office, and use that information to support or oppose them (Ansolabehere and Jones 2010; Canes-Wrone, Brady and Cogan 2002; Hutchings 2003). In this way, constituents are able to keep representatives "in step" with their policy preferences and ensure that government remains responsive to public opinion. While numerous studies have examined whether voters are capable of meeting these standards, few have considered that this model of accountability focuses on only one "component" of representation, the substantive representation of constituents' policy preferences.

Politicians represent their constituents in a multitude of ways beyond such policy representation (Eulau and Karps 1977; Pitkin 1967). The descriptive representation of voters' demographic characteristics (e.g. their race) is a significant component of the legislator-constituent relationship, helping to shape voters' views of the political world. Indeed, studies of descriptive representation suggest voters have more trust in, and perceive more responsiveness from, same-race politicians (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Banducci, Donovan and Karp 2004; Gay 2002; Pantoja and Segura 2003).

These effects may, however, diminish the extent to which constituents hold incumbents accountable for their substantive record. In this paper, I derive hypotheses from these theories of descriptive representation that outline two ways in which a shared racial identity might affect voters' responses to legislators' substantive records. First, voters may use descriptive representation as a heuristic for substantive representation, and erroneously perceive greater policy congruence with same-race legislators. Second, voters may value descriptive representation as an intrinsic good, and overlook substantive representation when evaluating their representatives. In both cases, descriptive representation could reduce accountability for substantive representation.

Assessing whether descriptive representation does affect constituents' responses to substantive representation in these ways has eluded definitive study in the past for two key reasons. First, in the US, the race and policy records of Members of Congress (MCs) are often correlated such that it is difficult to distinguish voters' responses to the two using observational data (Abrajano, Nagler and Alvarez 2005; Highton 2004). Second, national survey samples usually contain too few minorities to make reliable inferences about how non-White voters respond to legislators of different races, meaning that our understanding of responses to legislators of different races is often limited to White voters alone (e.g.

Terkildsen 1993 or Sigelman et al. 1995).

The current study is designed specifically to overcome these problems. To assess whether Whites and minorities differ in their responses to descriptive and substantive representation, I use a unique survey sample stratified by race to include equal numbers of Black, Hispanic, and White respondents. To disentangle the causal effects of a legislator's race and her roll call record, I designed an embedded experiment that manipulates both the race and policy positions of a (fictitious) MC. Together, these approaches allow us to confidently assess for the first time the causal effects of descriptive and substantive representation on voters of different races.

The results illuminate how the descriptive representation of race can shape constituents' responses to the substantive representation of their policy preferences. The evidence suggests that a shared racial identity is often used as a heuristic for shared policy positions, and is often seen as an intrinsically valued good by voters. These results vary across races and education levels, suggesting features of the voters moderate the effects of descriptive representation in important ways. I begin in the next section by developing several hypotheses from theories of descriptive representation.

The effect of descriptive representation on responses to substantive representation

Based on theories of descriptive representation, I derive two hypotheses about the effects of a shared racial identity on responses to legislators' substantive records. First, a shared racial identity may act as a heuristic for shared policy preferences, leading voters to perceive greater congruence with descriptive representatives than exists. Second, descriptive representation may be valued as an intrinsic good, leading voters to support same-race legislators regardless of their actual record.

Descriptive representation as a heuristic for substantive representation

Given low levels of knowledge about politics, it is perhaps to be expected that voters frequently rely on heuristics to make sense of the political world (Popkin 1991). Alongside cues such as party affiliation or incumbency, voters may rely on race as a guide to legislators' records, inferring that representatives who "look like" them are likely to share their views (Bianco 1994; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2003; Gay 2002;

Graves and Lee 2000). Indeed, theories of "minority empowerment" postulate that Black voters feel more engaged and efficacious when represented descriptively because it provides "cues from political figures indicating likely policy responsiveness" (Bobo and Gilliam (1990, 379); see also Banducci, Donovan and Karp (2004); Sanchez and Morin (2011)).

Studies of Black MCs suggest that they are aware their constituents infer policy congruence from descriptive representation. Fenno (2003) documents what he terms "representational leeway on policy matters" for Black representatives, because Black constituents assume they are being represented substantively. As Rep. Louis Stokes (D-OH) explained, he had considerable freedom in Congress because "everything they [his constituents] know about Lou Stokes tells them "he's up there doing a good job for us." It's a blind faith type of thing" (quoted in Fenno (2003, 32–33)).

Such "blind faith" reliance on the heuristic of descriptive representation may result in reduced accountability for substantive representation, if descriptively-represented voters assume greater policy congruence than actually exists (Mansbridge 1999). Stated conversely, a *lack* of faith in representatives of *other* races may lead constituents to assume their policy preferences have been poorly represented (Moskowitz and Stroh 1994). Taken collectively, these theories of descriptive representation thus suggest a first hypothesis:

(H1) *Voters will perceive greater policy congruence with MCs of the same race than with MCs of other races, given the same level of actual congruence*.

Descriptive representation as an intrinsic good

Theories of descriptive representation also suggest that voters may value representatives of the same race as an intrinsic good, regardless of any (perceived) substantive representation that accompanies it. Although critical of descriptive representation's instrumental, policy, value, Swain (1995, 217) notes that it fulfills a "host of psychological needs that are no less important for being intangible". These intangible benefits include greater trust and pride in same-race representatives, as well as a greater sense of political inclusion and access (Abney and Hutcheson 1981; Fenno 2003; Pantoja and Segura 2003; Sanchez and Morin 2011).

MCs certainly present themselves to constituents in ways which emphasize their shared descriptive

and emotional bonds, stressing that "I am one of you" (Fenno 1978; Bianco 1994). The resulting trust in descriptive representatives may lead voters to overlook any "out of step" policy votes they cast — either because they assume legislators have private information and are using it for their benefit (Bianco 1994) or because they nonetheless value the access and ease of communication that comes with descriptive representation. As Fenno (1978, 240) observes, voters "may want good access or the assurance of good access as much as they want good policy. They may want "a good man" or "a good woman," someone whose assurances they can trust, as much as they want good policy." Likewise, the ease of "shorthand communication" that results from the visible signals of shared life experiences may be valued as an intrinsic good no matter if it comes with reduced substantive representation (Mansbridge 1999, 641).

These theories hold that voters may value descriptive representation in and of itself, leading to more favorable evaluations of same-race legislators. This could happen in two ways, either as an overall boost in support or in the reduction of the importance of substantive representation for evaluations. I formulate two hypotheses to cover these possibilities:

(H2a) *Voters will rate MCs of the same race more positively than MCs of other races, given the same level of policy congruence*; and

(H2b) *Voters' ratings of MCs of the same race will be less dependent on policy congruence than their ratings of MCs of other races*.

Minority empowerment and White racial resentment

These theories of descriptive representation were originally developed with reference to Black voters. Two questions remain: does the minority empowerment thesis apply to *other* minority groups? And how should we conceptualize *White* voters' responses to descriptive representation?

The mechanism behind minority empowerment — that, accustomed to being marginalized, being descriptively represented is an empowering experience — is not logically limited to African-Americans. Indeed, extensive evidence shows that Hispanics (and other minorities) are empowered by descriptive representation (Barreto 2010; Graves and Lee 2000; Sanchez and Morin 2011). We might expect smaller effects of same-race representation amongst Hispanics given their greater racial and ancestral heterogeneity (Stokes-Brown 2006). However, common experiences of discrimination have activated a

pan-ethnic identity (Barreto 2010; Sanchez and Masuoka 2010). Indeed, this discrimination is precisely what drives minority empowerment — descriptive representation is important to voters *because* of their shared political marginalization.

This thesis, however, cannot explain how Whites respond to descriptive representation. Accustomed to being in the majority, Whites are unlikely to feel "empowered" when their MC is White. Nonetheless, there is evidence that descriptive representation is as or more important to White voters as it is to minorities. Claudine Gay's work shows that Whites react negatively and disengage from politics when represented by non-White MCs (Gay 2001, 2002). These results are interpreted as a *negative* response to *non*-White politicians rather than the *positive* response minority voters have to *same*-race politicians (Hutchings and Valentino (2004, 395) note this asymmetry in their review of the literature), attributed to Whites' continuing racial resentment and negative stereotyping of minorities (Moskowitz and Stroh 1994; Sigelman et al. 1995; Terkildsen 1993).

Although the mechanisms are different — racial resentment amongst Whites, feelings of empowerment amongst minorities — the theories predict the same empirical result, that voters of all races value descriptive representation for both intrinsic and (perceived) instrumental reasons.

The moderating effects of education and ideology

Beyond differences based on race, education and ideological orientation are likely to moderate voter responses to MCs of different races in several ways. First, the effects of a politician's race is likely to be conditional on voters' education. Low-information, less well-educated, voters are more likely to rely on the cue of descriptive representation (Abrajano, Nagler and Alvarez 2005; Banducci, Donovan and Karp 2004), and to downplay policy congruence (Tate 2003, 127) in evaluations. Further, less-educated Whites are particularly likely to hold racially resentful views, and thus more likely to prefer same-race representatives (Matsubayashi and Ueda 2011). For all voters, then, the effects of racial representation should be greatest amongst those with the least education.

A competing hypothesis to the descriptive representation theories outlined above suggests that voters use legislators' race as a cue of their ideology (rather than using a shared racial identity as a cue of shared policy preferences) and perceive minority politicians as more liberal than Whites (McDermott

1998). Under this hypothesis, evaluations of legislators are driven by ideological stereotypes, not descriptive representation. If this is the case, then the voter's own ideology should moderate the effects of race, such that conservative voters perceive less congruence with non-White MCs than liberal voters, and rate their performance less positively than liberal voters do.

Finally, for voters to make these ideological inferences, they must have a certain degree of political knowledge. Knowing the stereotype (that non-White MCs are more liberal) and successfully applying it may require information beyond that possessed by less-educated individuals (Koch 2002).[1] Therefore, we might expect education and ideology to interact, so that the more educated voters (who are most aware of the ideological stereotype) will respond to this cue the most.

Data

Given their lower numbers in the population, most national surveys do not contain enough minority respondents to analyze with confidence, leaving previous studies of the effects of racial representation to focus on Whites alone (e.g. Terkildsen 1993; Sigelman et al. 1995). To assess how descriptive representation affects voters of various races, I utilize a unique survey sample. In July 2011, Knowledge Networks (KN) selected a random sample of U.S. adults from their online panel that was stratified by race to create roughly equal numbers of Black (N=623), Hispanic (N=611), and White (N=618) respondents.[2] Although the overall sample is obviously not representative of the adult population, within each racial group, respondents are representative of the broader race.[3]

[1] Koch's research is focused on *gender*, not racial, stereotypes amongst voters, but his finding that more politically-knowledgeable voters are most likely to apply these stereotypes to politicians is still relevant here.

[2] Panel members had previously answered questions about their race and ethnicity. Respondents who had identified as Hispanic and no other race/ethnicity are counted as Hispanic. Respondents who identified as non-Hispanic Blacks with no other race, and non-Hispanic Whites with no other race, are counted as Black and White respectively.

[3] Of particular concern with Internet samples is that respondents may be more politically sophisticated than the general population. As a validity check, Table A1 in the Online Appendix compares the educational attainment of respondents in the (unweighted) KN sample to the 2011 Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. The distributions for African-American and White respondents are remarkably similar, differing by just 1.95 percentage points on average. The KN Hispanic sample differs more from the CPS at lower levels of educational attainment. KN Hispanic respondents are more likely to have a high school degree than not (47.6% versus 18.0%) compared to the CPS sample

Studies of congressional representation that use observational data face the problem that the race and policy positions of MCs in the real world are highly correlated, making it difficult to tell whether voters are responding to descriptive or substantive representation. To overcome this problem, I constructed an experiment embedded in the survey that isolates the causal effects of an MC's race and his policy positions. The rest of this section explains in detail its design.

Initial items and experimental manipulation

The survey began by asking for respondents' opinions "about some of the main issues being discussed in politics today" (full question wording is in the Online Appendix). I selected four high profile bills that *Congressional Quarterly* and the *Washington Post* identified as recent "key" votes in Congress, and asked respondents if they favored or opposed: (1) the health care reform of 2010, (2) the stimulus bill from 2009, (3) immigration reform creating a pathway to citizenship, (4) increasing taxes on those earning $250,000 or more, and (5) the use of racial profiling by airport security officials. This final issue was not on the congressional agenda, but was included to assess whether responses were most pronounced on racial issues (as I discuss in the conclusion, there is no evidence that this racialized issue affected responses any more than the non-racial issues did).

After several other questions, respondents were told: "As you know, many Members of Congress use websites as a way of communicating with constituents. We are interested in how well these sites communicate information to voters. We'd like you to look at a screenshot from the current website of one U.S. Representative, and then ask you some questions about it".[4]

Respondents were randomly assigned to see a site for a (fictitious) Black, Hispanic, or White MC. The names of the MCs were chosen to be as distinctively associated with a particular race as possible, in keeping with other experiments that manipulate race (e.g. Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004). Using 2000 Census data (Word et al. 2000), I selected surnames that were overwhelmingly associated with one race: the Black MC was named Joe Washington (in 2000, 90% of all adults with the surname

(30.3% versus 34.5%). At the higher end of the education scale, the samples are nearly identical.

[4] Reading about a legislator via their website is, of course, not the only way that constituents learn about their representatives' records. To maximize the internal validity of the experiment, and given the context of an online survey, showing respondents a website was the least obtrusive way of outlining the legislator's positions.

Washington were Black); the Hispanic MC was named Jose Gonzalez (94% of all those named Gonzales were Hispanic); and the White MC was named Joe Mueller (97% of all those named Mueller were White). The website included a prominent image of the MC in the banner heading. Stock photos were used: in each case, the photo was a close-up shot of a smiling middle-aged man wearing a suit and tie (the Online Appendix includes all three screenshots).[5]

The screenshot shown was of an "Issues and Legislation" page. I sampled the official websites of twenty House Democrats and twenty House Republicans, and designed the page to be as similar as possible. To ensure that the only cues respondents received about the MC were his race and policy positions, the screenshot did not include mention of the MC's party. This is not unrealistic: Contini et al. (2005) show that around half of MCs do not display their party affiliation on their official site. None of the sites I sampled included the MC's party on their issues/legislation page.

The text of the page read, "Congressman [last name] continues to work on the major legislation that matters most to our district, including:" followed by a list of his positions on five bills. These mirror the five policies respondents had given opinions on earlier. The MC's positions (given in the Online Appendix) were described in ways that actual MCs had done during congressional debate. Respondents were randomly assigned to a MC who agreed with them on one of the five policies (the "low" congruence condition), or an MC who agreed with them on four of the five areas (the "high" congruence condition). Which issues they agreed on, and their listed order, were also randomized.

Evaluations and independent variables

Following the screenshot, respondents evaluated the MC. **Job approval** was measured with the question: "Although Congressman [last name] is not your current Representative, do you approve or disapprove of the job he is doing as a Congressman?" This is coded as a categorical variable, with response options of: strongly disapprove, somewhat disapprove, neither approve nor disapprove, somewhat approve, strongly approve. **Perceptions of policy congruence** were measured with the question: "Imagine a scale running from 0% to 100% that measures how often a politician represented your views

[5] The only descriptive characteristic of the legislator that is varied is his race. A burgeoning literature highlights the importance of intersecting identities for political behavior (e.g. Philpot and Walton 2007), but sample size limitations precluded simultaneously manipulating the MC's other characteristics. I return to this point in the conclusion.

on important policies. 0% would mean they never represented your views. 100% would mean that they always represented your views. Where on this scale would you put Congressman [last name]?". Responses were measured with an adjustable "slider" scale.

Before the screenshot, respondents were asked about the potential moderators discussed earlier. **Ideology** is measured with responses to, "One way that people think about politics is in terms of how liberal or conservative they are. Imagine a scale that runs from 0 to 100, where 0 would mean extremely liberal and 100 would mean extremely conservative. Where on this scale would you put yourself?". For clarity, this is labeled as "Conservative" in the results since higher values mean the respondent placed themselves further to the right. The highest level of formal **education** attained is measured on a 1–4 numeric scale, where 1=Less than high school, 2=High school; 3=Some college, and 4=Bachelor's degree or higher (see Gay (2002) for a similar coding strategy).

To assess the effects of these moderators, the analyses use several model specifications. I include interactions for the respondents' education, to assess whether voters with different levels of education are more or less likely to support representatives of the same race. In the same way that McDermott (1998) and others do, I include interactions for the respondent's conservatism to assess whether voters used ideological stereotypes to evaluate them. Finally, I include interactions between ideology, education, and the MC's race, to assess whether the use of ideological stereotypes is more common among the most educated. To ease interpretation of these interaction effects, I center education and ideology around their sample mean. This allows the coefficients to be interpreted as for a respondent with average values on the other variables.

Descriptive representation and perceptions of substantive representation

I begin by assessing whether perceptions of policy congruence with the MC were shaped by his race. I fit a series of OLS regressions that predict these perceptions. For each group of respondents, I estimate two models: first, a basic model that includes as predictors the race of the MC and the actual congruence condition (marked as "a" in Table 1); second, a more complex model that interacts these variables with

the respondent's education and ideology (marked as "b").[6]

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Across all of the models, the only significant effect of the MC's race is on Black respondents, who perceived around 4.5 percentage points greater congruence with a Black MC than a White MC, controlling for actual congruence (in Model 1(a)) and for interactions with ideology and education (in Model 1(b)). Simulating the results from Model 1(a) as in King, Tomz and Wittenberg (2000) demonstrates that Black respondents shown a White legislator who agreed with them on four of five policies perceived 47.6% congruence. When shown a Black legislator who agreed with them on the same number of issues, that rose to 52.2%.[7] Consistent with theories of minority empowerment, Black voters perceived greater substantive representation from legislators who look like them.

There is no evidence for an equivalent effect amongst Hispanic and White voters, however. The coefficient for the race of the MC is insignificant in Models 2(a)–3(b). Descriptive representation does not appear to affect these voters' impressions of substantive representation. For example, Hispanic respondents are predicted to perceive essentially identical levels of congruence with Hispanic (48.8%) and White (48.9%) MCs (these simulations are again for the "high" congruence condition, but the effect sizes are the same in the "low" condition). Likewise, Whites perceive the same levels of congruence with Black (57.2%) and Hispanic (54.7%) legislators as with White (56.2%) MCs.

Unlike in previous studies, education does not appear to moderate the effect of descriptive representation. The interactions between education and the race of the MC are mostly insignificant: less-educated voters were no more likely to infer policy congruence from the race of the MC than well-educated voters, with one exception. As shown by the interaction between a Black MC and education in Model 2(b), better-educated Hispanic voters saw the Black MC as more congruent than the White MC (β=6.86, SE=2.43). There is no evidence, though, that descriptive representation *per se* is what matters: White and Hispanic MCs were perceived as equally congruent with these voters.

[6] Although randomization checks did not suggest any imbalance across the experiment conditions, I fitted models that included controls for the respondent's gender, age, interest in politics, and their region. None of the effects reported in the text are altered. These additional models are reported in Tables A2 and A3 in the Online Appendix.

[7] The equivalent estimates for voters shown a legislator who agreed with them on only one of five policies were 35.3% and 39.9% respectively.

Evidence that voters stereotype non-White MCs as liberal is mixed at best. On the one hand, liberal and conservative Whites perceived White and Black (β=−.02, SE=.10) or Hispanic (β=−.13, SE=.10) MCs as equally congruent, suggesting little use of such stereotypes. On the other hand, the ideology of Black and Hispanic voters does affect perceptions of different MCs. More conservative Blacks perceived greater congruence with the Hispanic MC than the White MC (β=.29, SE=.12), and more conservative Hispanics perceived greater congruence with the White MC than the Black MC (β=−.22, SE=.10). This suggests Blacks stereotyped Hispanic MCs as more conservative than White MCs, and Hispanics stereotyped Black MCs as more liberal than White MCs. Why *Whites*' evaluations are not influenced in the same way is not immediately clear from these data. There is no evidence that such stereotyping is limited to voters with more education, either: the three-way interaction between ideology, education, and the MC's race is insignificant every time.[8]

These limited effects do not appear to be the result of respondents not engaging with the experimental stimuli. Seeing an MC who took a congruent position on four out of five policies, as opposed to one of the five policies, increased perceptions of congruence dramatically, by between twelve and twenty percentage points. There is some evidence that the MC's positions had a greater impact on Whites' perceptions than Blacks' or Hispanics' (for Whites, β=19.60, SE=1.80; compared to β=12.26, SE=1.79 for Blacks or β=11.95, SE=1.87 for Hispanics). This is consistent with Griffin and Flavin (2007)'s finding that Blacks' perceptions of MCs are driven relatively less by their legislator's actual stances than are Whites' perceptions. Nonetheless, the positions the MC took were a strong predictor of perceptions of congruence for voters of all races — indicating that respondents did engage with and learn from his website.

In sum, the descriptive representation of race can have a significant, if limited, impact on perceptions of substantive representation. Over and above the actual positions the MC took, Black voters believed that the Black legislator represented their views on policy matters better than a White MC

[8] The effect of ideology is significant across groups: conservatives of all races perceived greater congruence than liberals (for Black voters, β=.17, SE=.10; for Hispanic voters, β=.43, SE=.08; for White voters, β=.32, SE=.08). It is not clear why this is the case. Perhaps after being told the legislator was a current MC they inferred he was more likely to be a conservative than liberal, given GOP control of the House at the time. Testing this hypothesis would require additional data taken from a period of Democratic control; as such, it remains merely speculation for now.

with the same positions. In contrast, Hispanic and White voters are unaffected by descriptive representation, perceiving equal levels of policy congruence no matter the race of the MC. I turn now from perceptions to the effect of this congruence on approval ratings.

Descriptive representation and accountability for substantive representation

To explore the structure of approval ratings, I estimate ordered logistic regression models, shown in Table 2. The basic models (labeled as "a") include the race of the MC (to assess H2a), policy congruence, and the interaction between the two (to assess H2b). The more complicated models (labeled "b") interact all of these variables with the respondent's education and ideology.

[TABLE 2 AND FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Descriptive representation has no direct impact on Black or Hispanic voters, as indicated by the insignificant coefficients for the MC's race in Models 1(a)–2(b). In contrast, White voters are revealed to have a distinct preference for same-race legislators. Model 3(b) shows that Whites give lower ratings to Black (β=−.61, SE=.28) and Hispanic (β=−.58, SE=.30) MCs than the White MC. To convey the substantive significance of these effects, I simulate the regression results and predict Whites' ratings of the MC (ideology and education are set to their mean values, congruence to "low" for now). Given the same policy congruence, education, and ideology, Whites are predicted to disapprove or strongly disapprove of Black (probability=.25 or .24 respectively) or Hispanic (.25 or .23) MCs more than White MCs (.20 or .15). Indeed, predicted net approval ratings for Black and Hispanic MCs are about twice as negative (−39.4 and −37.3) than for White MCs (−18.5).

This disapproval of non-White MCs amongst White voters is, however, substantially moderated by education. In Model 3(b), the interaction between education and MC race is positive for both Black and Hispanic MCs (β=.59, SE=.29 and β=.78, SE=.30 respectively), while the main education term is negative (β=−.65, SE=.21). In other words, well-educated Whites approved of non-White MCs more, and of the White MC less, than less-educated Whites did. Figure 1 shows predicted approval ratings for each MC, organized by the voter's education. Plots (a) to (c) in the top row show predicted approval

ratings of Black, Hispanic, and White MCs by Whites with no high school degree. Plots (d) to (f) show approval by Whites with a college degree.

Figure 1 highlights the diverging evaluations given by voters with different levels of education. As seen in plots (a) to (c), Whites with no high school degree approve more of the White MC than the non-White MCs, all else equal. When evaluating a non-White MC, they are more likely to disapprove than approve (probability=.23 versus .10 for the Black MC; .26 versus .07 for the Hispanic MC). When evaluating a White MC, however, these probabilities are reversed: voters are more likely to approve (.29) than disapprove (.11). Even though policy congruence is held constant, low-education Whites viewed the White MC much more favorably than the Black or Hispanic MCs. In contrast, Whites with a college degree are unaffected by the race of the MC, as shown in plots (d) to (f). For example, highly educated Whites are as likely to disapprove of the White MC (probability=.26) as the Black (.25) or Hispanic (.23) MC (the probabilities of other responses are likewise indistinguishable across MCs). For White voters with a college degree, the MC's race is simply not a factor in assessing his performance.

These predicted probabilities are for a MC who took mostly non-congruent policy positions. Simulating a similar set of predictions, this time for a MC who took mostly congruent positions, reveals the trade-off that low-education Whites perceive between descriptive and substantive representation. Their probability of approving of a White MC who agrees with them on just one of the five policies is .29. This is statistically indistinguishable from their probability of approving of a Black or Hispanic MC who agrees with them on *four* of the five issues (.32 and .32 respectively). Less educated White voters are as likely to approve of a White MC who rarely agrees with them as they are to approve of a non-White MC who agrees with them almost all the time. For these voters, being represented by a White representative appears as important as being represented by someone with the same policy views.

There is no evidence that voters weigh the policy record of MCs of different races in different ways, as H2b predicted. Across each of the models, the interactions between the MC's race and policy congruence are insignificant. This is *not* because voters are unresponsive to the MC's substantive record. On the contrary, the main term for policy congruence is positive and significant in every model: a shift from low to high is predicted to result in an increased probability of the voter approving of the MC of .24 for Blacks, .26 for Hispanics, and .21 for Whites (these are simulated from Models 1(b), 2(b), and 3(b),

and are for evaluations of a White MC, the modal value in the real world of U.S. politics). Descriptive representation does not alter the weight given to substantive representation for job evaluations. Rather, some voters simply prefer same-race representatives, over and above the degree of policy congruence between them.

As before, stereotypes about the liberalness of non-White legislators appear to have only minimal effects. More conservative Hispanics were slightly less likely to approve of the Black MC than the White MC (β=−.04, SE=.02), suggesting that they saw the Black MC as more liberal. Black and White voters showed no such effect, however. There is some suggestion that well-educated voters are more aware of and likely to use these stereotypes. For example, amongst well-educated White voters, conservatives rated the Black MC more negatively than liberals did, all else equal (the interaction between a Black MC, conservative, and education is β=−.03, SE=.01). The other three-way interaction terms for education and ideology do not present strongly significant results, however. In line with findings about gender stereotypes (Koch 2002), better-educated voters do seem somewhat more aware of stereotypes about the ideologies of non-White MCs. Ultimately, however, these estimate sizes are minimal and do little to shift approval ratings.

These results show that the descriptive representation of race *is* viewed as an intrinsic good, regardless of the substantive representation that accompanies it — but only by certain groups of voters. Less-educated White voters in particular approve of the White MC much more than the non-White MCs — and are willing to "trade off" low levels of policy congruence for a legislator who looks like them. These intrinsic benefits are not as powerful in shaping non-White voters' evaluations, however, suggesting that descriptive representation matters most for White voters, similar to findings in previous research (Gay 2001, 2002).

Discussion and conclusions

Research on how constituents hold their elected representatives accountable has tended to focus on just one component of representation, the extent to which legislators' substantive records are congruent with voter preferences. This study shows the value of exploring the interactive effects of different components of representation — and in particular demonstrates the ways that a shared racial identity

with a legislator can impact constituents' responses to their policy record.

First, as predicted by H1, there is evidence that Black voters use a shared racial identity as a heuristic for shared policy positions. Descriptive representation increased perceptions of substantive representation by around 4.5 percentage points, over and above actual congruence. Second, consistent with H2a, Whites were more likely to approve of White legislators than non-White legislators with identical policy records. This is particularly concentrated amongst those with the least education: Whites with no high school degree were just as likely to approve of a non-congruent White MC as of a highly-congruent Black or Hispanic MC. There is no evidence supporting H2b, the hypothesis that voters down-weight policy congruence when evaluating descriptive representatives. Nor is there much support for the idea that voters' responses result from stereotypes of non-White MCs as more liberal. Liberals and conservatives responded to MCs in similar ways, suggesting that descriptive representation — not stereotypes of non-White MCs as liberals — shaped evaluations.

These results show that descriptive representation is, in different ways, of importance to Black and White voters. Hispanics, however, appear unaffected by the race of the MC. This null finding suggests that theories of minority empowerment, developed largely with reference to African-Americans, may not apply to Hispanics. Exploring why is beyond the scope of this paper, although scholars have suggested that heterogeneity in ancestry and racial-ethnic identification creates a fractured group identity (Sanchez and Masuoka 2010; Stokes-Brown 2006) that requires explicitly ethnic appeals by politicians to become unified (Barreto 2010). The effect of descriptive representation may be conditional on politicians taking certain positions on racialized issues, for example.

Although not shown here due to page limitations, further analysis to assess whether descriptive representation affects responses to MC's positions on racial matters particularly strongly did not provide any strong evidence. I replicated the models in Tables 1 and 2, including congruence on each policy individually rather than the aggregated low/high conditions. If descriptive representation matters most for issues of race, then the interaction effect between the MC's race and his position on racialized issues included on the survey (immigration reform and racial profiling) should be significantly larger than the interaction between his race and positions on other issues. This was, however, not the case. With one exception that actually went in the opposite direction as predicted — Hispanics placed *less* weight on

immigration policy when evaluating the Black MC — his race made no differences to the importance of racial issues for evaluations. More details and full regression results can be found in the Online Appendix.

The survey sample and experiment used here gives greater confidence in these conclusions than previous studies. Stratifying the sample by race allows analysis of all voters, not just Whites. And randomly manipulating the MC's race and policy positions separates the causal effects of descriptive and substantive representation, which are highly correlated in observational studies. At the same time, as with any study, there are important limitations to the design that should be acknowledged.

First, although the MC's website, policy agenda, and positions were carefully based on those of actual MCs, one criticism is that voters in the real world rarely evaluate politicians on such little information as given here. Limiting the amount of information respondents had about the MC, however, maximizes internal validity of the experiment, and allows for clear estimation of the causal effects of race. Further, this low-information scenario may not actually differ too substantially from the real nature of representation, given the public's general lack of knowledge about and interest in Congress.

Second, the experiment is limited to manipulating a single descriptive characteristic, race. All of the MCs were middle-aged males. Theories of descriptive representation show that the intersection of political identities can produce distinctive voter responses (e.g. Philpot and Walton 2007). Future work could manipulate the MC's gender *and* race to assess how their intersection affects voters.[9] Similarly, other heuristics like party affiliation — omitted here — could be incorporated in future studies, as in work that explores gender stereotypes within and between parties (Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009).

Finally, the causal mechanisms underpinning these results are left somewhat ambiguous by the experiment, although they are consistent with previous work. The commonality that minorities feel with same-race legislators (Barreto 2010; Tate 2003) and lingering racial resentment amongst Whites (Moskowitz and Stroh 1994) probably drive these effects. Proving this cannot be done with the data at hand, however: feelings of commonality or resentment were not measured in the survey to avoid cuing voters in to the study's aim and priming them to think about the MC in racial terms (Mendelberg (2008,

[9] As a primitive test of this, I estimated models that interacted the experimental conditions and the respondent's gender. These did not reveal any substantial differences in how men and women of different races responded to the (male) MCs. Table A4 in the Online Appendix presents these initial results; more direct tests await future research.

116-7) discusses similar concerns). Future experiments could randomly prime feelings of commonality and resentment immediately prior to the stimulus, and assess differences in responses, although this would obviously require a significantly greater sample size and more complex experimental design.

Although there is ample room to replicate and extend on this study, the results here illuminate the significant role that descriptive representation plays in shaping constituents' responses, both as a heuristic signaling greater substantive representation and as an intrinsic good in and of itself. Voters' perceptions of legislators' records and subsequent evaluations — central to standard models of accountability — can be shaped in important ways by racial representation. Previous theories of descriptive representation have focused primarily on the positive benefits — increased trust, improved access, greater efficacy — it brings for constituents. Along with these benefits are not insignificant costs, if descriptively-represented voters give greater "representational leeway on policy matters" (Fenno 2003) to legislators who look like them. The diminished accountability for substantive representation shown here suggests the need to re-evaluate the normative value of descriptive representation, and highlights the importance of assessing multiple "components" of representation simultaneously to fully understand the legislator-constituent relationship.

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Table 1: OLS regression models predicting perceptions of policy congruence, by the race of the respondent.

	Black respondents		Hispanic respondents		White respondents	
	Model 1(a)	Model 1(b)	Model 2(a)	Model 2(b)	Model 3(a)	Model 3(b)
Intercept	35.30 (1.79)***	36.14 (1.83)***	36.92 (1.79)***	36.49 (1.83)***	36.59 (1.77)***	36.28 (1.89)***
Black MC	4.54 (2.17)*	4.50 (2.24)*	0.97 (2.28)	2.48 (2.34)	0.99 (2.18)	−0.88 (2.37)
× Conservative		0.13 (0.11)		−0.22 (0.10)*		−0.02 (0.10)
× Education		3.13 (2.31)		6.86 (2.43)**		2.60 (2.36)
× Conservative × Education		−0.18 (0.11)		0.08 (0.11)		−0.02 (0.09)
Hispanic MC	3.41 (2.22)	4.42 (2.30)†	−0.07 (2.28)	0.02 (2.24)	−1.46 (2.21)	−1.12 (2.31)
× Conservative		0.29 (0.12)*		−0.12 (0.09)		−0.13 (0.10)
× Education		2.74 (2.44)		0.44 (2.37)		1.56 (2.34)
× Conservative × Education		−0.10 (0.12)		0.08 (0.09)		0.13 (0.10)
High policy congruence	12.26 (1.79)***	12.54 (1.83)***	11.95 (1.87)***	13.47 (1.88)***	19.60 (1.80)***	18.04 (1.93)***
× Conservative		−0.17 (0.09)†		−0.05 (0.08)		−0.09 (0.08)
× Education		3.11 (1.90)		4.35 (1.95)*		6.96 (1.92)***
× Conservative × Education		−0.08 (0.09)		−0.12 (0.08)		−0.06 (0.08)
Conservative		0.17 (0.10)†		0.43 (0.08)***		0.32 (0.08)***
Education		−4.60 (1.86)*		−5.70 (2.00)**		−3.83 (1.94)*
Conservative × Education		0.07 (0.10)		−0.05 (0.09)		−0.08 (0.08)
Adj. R^2	0.08	0.15	0.07	0.20	0.17	0.23
N	567	548	557	541	581	570

$^{***}p < 0.001$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{\dagger}p < 0.1$

Note: Excluded experimental conditions are White MC and low actual policy congruence. Ideology and education are both centered around their sample means.

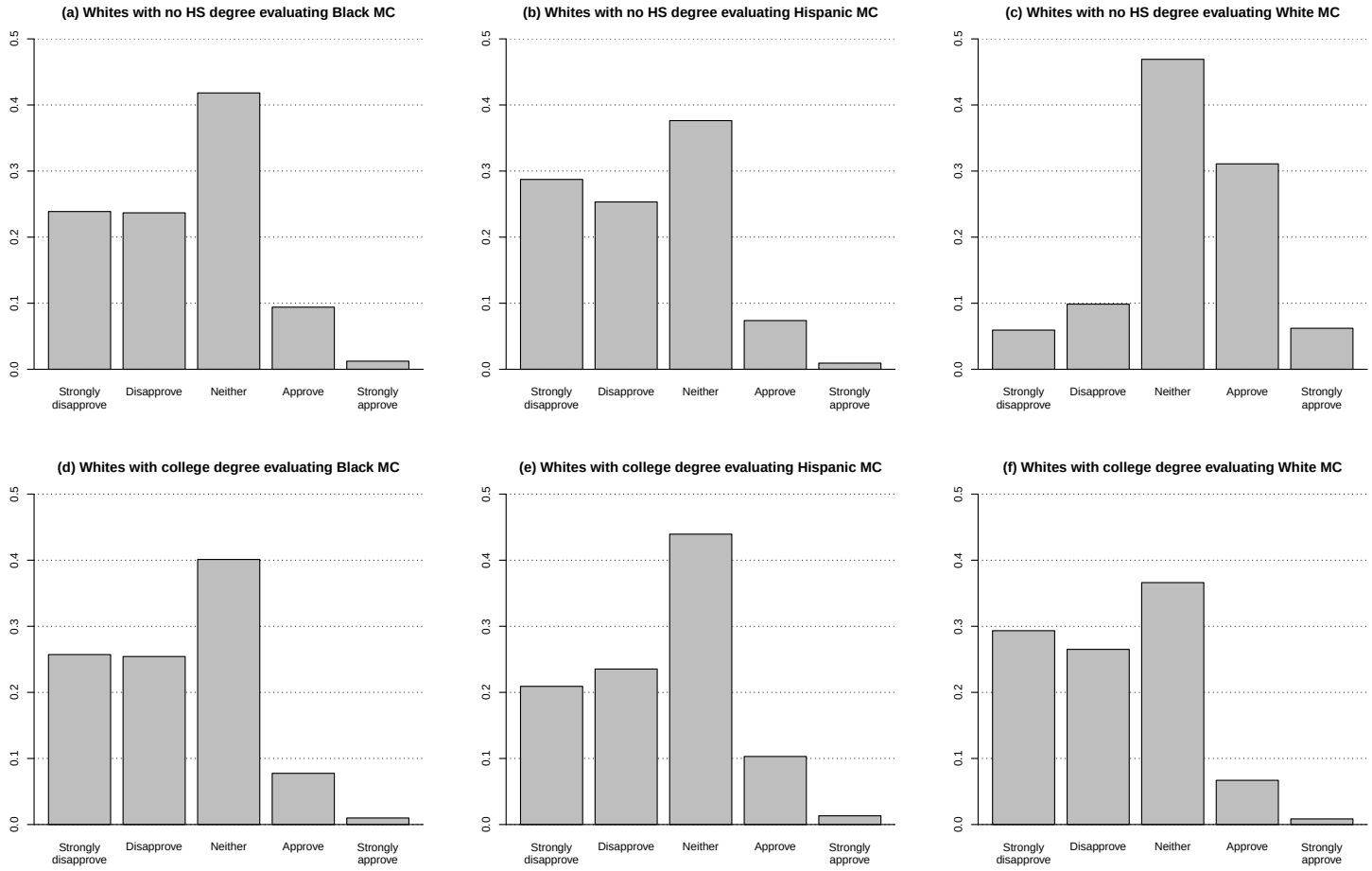
Table 2: Ordered logistic regression models predicting job approval of MC by the race of the respondent.

	Black respondents		Hispanic respondents		White respondents	
	Model 1(a)	Model 1(b)	Model 2(a)	Model 2(b)	Model 3(a)	Model 3(b)
Black MC	0.11 (0.27)	0.20 (0.29)	0.08 (0.26)	0.01 (0.30)	−0.33 (0.25)	−0.61 (0.28)*
× High congruence	0.13 (0.37)	−0.16 (0.42)	−0.23 (0.37)	−0.09 (0.42)	0.42 (0.36)	0.67 (0.42)
× Conservative		0.01 (0.02)		−0.04 (0.01)*		0.02 (0.01)
× Education		0.65 (0.30)*		0.23 (0.32)		0.59 (0.29)*
× Conservative × Education		0.02 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.02)†		−0.03 (0.01)*
× High congruence × Conservative		−0.02 (0.02)		0.02 (0.02)		−0.02 (0.02)
× High congruence × Education		−0.05 (0.44)		0.37 (0.44)		−0.65 (0.41)
× High congruence × Conservative × Education		−0.02 (0.02)		0.04 (0.02)*		0.04 (0.02)*
Hispanic MC	0.21 (0.27)	0.42 (0.29)	0.00 (0.27)	−0.01 (0.30)	−0.30 (0.27)	−0.58 (0.30)*
× High congruence	−0.09 (0.38)	−0.23 (0.44)	−0.23 (0.38)	−0.19 (0.42)	0.32 (0.37)	0.58 (0.42)
× Conservative		0.03 (0.02)†		−0.02 (0.01)†		0.00 (0.01)
× Education		0.37 (0.30)		0.02 (0.32)		0.78 (0.30)**
× Conservative × Education		0.03 (0.02)†		−0.02 (0.01)		−0.02 (0.01)
× High congruence × Conservative		−0.01 (0.02)		0.02 (0.02)		0.01 (0.02)
× High congruence × Education		0.29 (0.47)		0.27 (0.44)		−0.89 (0.42)*
× High congruence × Conservative × Education		−0.02 (0.02)		0.03 (0.02)†		0.00 (0.02)
High policy congruence	1.19 (0.27)***	1.47 (0.32)***	1.53 (0.27)***	1.77 (0.30)***	1.62 (0.26)***	1.38 (0.29)***
× Conservative		0.00 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.01)*		0.01 (0.01)
× Education		0.26 (0.33)		0.40 (0.32)		0.89 (0.29)**
× Conservative × Education		0.01 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.01)†		−0.02 (0.01)*
Conservative		−0.01 (0.01)		0.04 (0.01)***		0.00 (0.01)
Education		−0.59 (0.21)**		−0.49 (0.23)*		−0.65 (0.21)**
Conservative × Education		−0.02 (0.01)†		0.02 (0.01)*		0.02 (0.01)*
Threshold 1	−1.85 (0.22)***	−1.89 (0.24)***	−1.55 (0.20)***	−1.52 (0.23)***	−1.52 (0.20)***	−1.77 (0.22)***
Threshold 2	−0.76 (0.20)***	−0.69 (0.21)**	−0.65 (0.19)***	−0.56 (0.21)**	1.81 (0.20)***	−0.65 (0.20)**
Threshold 3	1.67 (0.21)***	1.81 (0.22)***	1.72 (0.20)***	1.87 (0.22)***	1.81 (0.20)***	1.66 (0.22)***
Threshold 4	4.16 (0.29)***	4.46 (0.31)***	3.80 (0.26)***	4.03 (0.29)***	4.01 (0.27)***	3.95 (0.29)***
Log Likelihood	−749.47	−664.67	−760.69	−694.26	−785.96	−727.16
N	612	558	596	556	613	578

***$p < 0.001$, **$p < 0.01$, *$p < 0.05$, †$p < 0.1$

Note: Excluded experimental conditions are White MC and low actual policy congruence. Approval of MC is coded as 1 (Strongly disapprove), 2 (Somewhat disapprove), 3 (Neither approve nor disapprove), 4 (Somewhat approve), 5 (Strongly approve). Ideology and education are both centered around their sample means.

Figure 1: Predicted probabilities of approval ratings from White respondents, by level of education and race of MC



Note: Predicted probabilities are simulated from Model 3(b) in Table 2, setting policy congruence to the "low" condition and ideology to its mean. Plots (a) to (c) in the top row are for White respondents with no high school degree; plots (d) to (f) are for White respondents with a college degree.

Constituents' Responses to Descriptive and Substantive Representation in Congress

Online Appendix

Table A1: Comparing educational attainment in Current Population Survey (CPS) and Knowledge Networks (KN) sample, by race

	Black respondents		Hispanic respondents		White respondents	
	CPS	KN	CPS	KN	CPS	KN
Less than high school	16.9	13.2	34.5	18.0	8.5	7.3
High school	34.0	29.4	30.3	47.6	30.5	30.4
Some college	31.6	35.8	22.9	20.0	29.4	29.3
Bachelor's degree or higher	17.5	21.7	12.3	14.4	31.5	33.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Cells show percentage of racial group from each sample with highest educational attainment. CPS 2011 data taken from U.S. Census Bureau. Percentages for KN sample are unweighted.

Table A2: Replicating Table 1 with additional controls

	Black respondents		Hispanic respondents		White respondents	
Intercept	41.03 (3.06)	***	38.51 (3.01)	***	39.58 (3.14)	***
Black MC	4.44 (2.24)	*	2.73 (2.36)		−0.89 (2.39)	
× Conservative	0.14 (0.11)		−0.22 (0.10)	*	−0.01 (0.10)	
× Education	2.33 (2.31)		6.79 (2.46)	**	2.48 (2.37)	
× Conservative × Education	−0.17 (0.11)		0.07 (0.11)		−0.01 (0.10)	
Hispanic MC	4.37 (2.29)	^	0.18 (2.26)		−1.17 (2.32)	
× Conservative	0.29 (0.12)	*	−0.12 (0.09)		−0.12 (0.10)	
× Education	2.45 (2.43)		0.34 (2.38)		1.73 (2.38)	
× Conservative × Education	−0.13 (0.12)		0.08 (0.09)		0.13 (0.10)	
High policy congruence	12.56 (1.84)	***	13.21 (1.90)	***	18.03 (1.95)	***
× Conservative	−0.13 (0.09)		−0.04 (0.08)		−0.09 (0.08)	
× Education	3.63 (1.91)	^	4.05 (1.96)	*	6.88 (1.93)	***
× Conservative × Education	−0.12 (0.09)		−0.12 (0.08)		−0.06 (0.08)	
Conservative	0.13 (0.10)		0.43 (0.08)	***	0.32 (0.08)	***
Education	−5.16 (1.87)	**	−5.71 (2.09)	**	−3.68 (1.98)	^
Conservative × Education	0.11 (0.10)		−0.05 (0.09)		−0.09 (0.08)	
Female	−1.46 (1.82)		−0.29 (1.93)		0.40 (1.81)	
Interest in politics	2.77 (0.98)	**	1.25 (0.99)		−0.52 (0.99)	
Age						
30–44	−2.86 (2.90)		1.00 (2.47)		−3.41 (3.05)	
45–59	−2.53 (2.75)		−1.72 (2.51)		−3.24 (2.84)	
60+	−5.11 (2.94)	^	−3.47 (3.03)		−3.05 (2.94)	
Region						
Midwest	−4.73 (2.23)	*	−4.61 (3.55)		−2.20 (2.28)	
Northeast	1.22 (2.74)		−0.30 (3.00)		1.09 (2.54)	
West	−3.68 (3.04)		−1.54 (2.02)		−2.17 (2.50)	
N	548		541		570	
R^2	.17		.19		.23	

Note: Excluded experimental conditions are White MC and low actual policy congruence. Excluded control conditions are male, age 18-29, and South. Interest in politics is measured on a numeric scale of 0 (Not at all), 1 (Somewhat), 2 (Fairly), 3 (Extremely). Ideology, education, and interest in politics are centered around their sample means. ^p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table A3: Replicating Table 2 with additional controls

	Black respondents		Hispanic respondents		White respondents	
Black MC	0.23 (0.29)		0.00 (0.30)		−0.63 (0.29)	*
× High congruence	−0.19 (0.42)		−0.08 (0.42)		0.66 (0.42)	
× Conservative	0.01 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.01)	*	0.02 (0.01)	
× Education	0.61 (0.30)	*	0.15 (0.32)		0.59 (0.29)	*
× Conservative × Education	0.03 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.02)	^	−0.03 (0.01)	*
× High congruence × Conservative	−0.02 (0.02)		0.02 (0.02)		−0.02 (0.02)	
× High congruence × Education	−0.09 (0.44)		0.36 (0.44)		−0.65 (0.42)	
× High congruence × Conservative × Education	−0.03 (0.02)		0.04 (0.02)	*	0.04 (0.02)	*
Hispanic MC	0.43 (0.29)		0.05 (0.30)		−0.62 (0.30)	*
× High congruence	−0.16 (0.44)		−0.28 (0.42)		0.63 (0.42)	
× Conservative	0.03 (0.02)	^	−0.02 (0.01)	^	0.00 (0.01)	
× Education	0.39 (0.31)		0.07 (0.32)		0.83 (0.30)	**
× Conservative × Education	0.03 (0.02)	^	−0.02 (0.01)		−0.02 (0.01)	^
× High congruence × Conservative	−0.01 (0.02)		0.02 (0.02)		0.01 (0.02)	
× High congruence × Education	0.29 (0.47)		0.19 (0.44)		−0.93 (0.43)	*
× High congruence × Conservative × Education	−0.02 (0.02)		0.03 (0.02)	^	0.00 (0.02)	
High policy congruence	1.47 (0.32)	***	1.79 (0.31)	***	1.42 (0.29)	***
× Conservative	0.00 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.01)	*	0.01 (0.01)	
× Education	0.28 (0.33)		0.38 (0.32)		0.91 (0.29)	**
× Conservative × Education	0.01 (0.02)		−0.03 (0.01)	^	−0.02 (0.01)	^
Conservative	−0.01 (0.01)		0.04 (0.01)	***	0.00 (0.01)	
Education	−0.58 (0.21)	**	−0.36 (0.23)		−0.63 (0.21)	**
Conservative × Education	−0.02 (0.01)	^	0.02 (0.01)	*	0.02 (0.01)	^
Female	0.00 (0.17)		0.26 (0.18)		0.18 (0.16)	
Interest in politics	−0.02 (0.09)		−0.04 (0.09)		−0.12 (0.09)	
Age						
30−−44	−0.09 (0.27)		0.08 (0.23)		−0.65 (0.27)	*
45−−59	−0.21 (0.26)		−0.54 (0.23)	*	−0.40 (0.26)	
60+	−0.30 (0.28)		−0.39 (0.29)		−0.10 (0.27)	
Region						
Midwest	−0.32 (0.21)		−0.30 (0.34)		0.12 (0.20)	
Northeast	0.24 (0.25)		−0.15 (0.28)		0.18 (0.23)	
West	−0.37 (0.28)		−0.12 (0.18)		−0.29 (0.23)	
Threshold 1	−2.15 (0.33)	***	−1.73 (0.32)	***	−1.99 (0.33)	***
Threshold 2	−0.93 (0.31)	**	−0.75 (0.31)	*	−0.84 (0.31)	**
Threshold 3	1.60 (0.32)	***	1.73 (0.31)	***	1.51 (0.32)	***
Threshold 4	4.25 (0.39)	***	3.91 (0.36)	***	3.82 (0.37)	***
N	558		556		578	
Log−likelihood	−660.64		−686.73		−719.67	

Note: Excluded experimental conditions are White MC and low policy congruence. Excluded control conditions are male, age 18-29, and South. Interest in politics is measured on a numeric scale of 0 (Not at all), 1 (Somewhat), 2 (Fairly), 3 (Extremely). Ideology, education, and interest in politics are centered around their sample means. Approval of MC is coded as 1 (Strongly disapprove), 2 (Somewhat disapprove), 3 (Neither approve nor disapprove), 4 (Somewhat approve), 5 (Strongly approve). ^p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table A4: Replicating models from Tables 1 and 2 with interaction for gender of respondent

	Black respondents				Hispanic respondents				White respondents			
	Perceived congruence (OLS)		Job approval (Ordered logit)		Perceived congruence (OLS)		Job approval (Ordered logit)		Perceived congruence (OLS)		Job approval (Ordered logit)	
Intercept	37.32 (2.56)	***			35.98 (2.63)	***			36.43 (2.52)	***		
Black MC	1.61 (3.13)		0.22 (0.40)		0.69 (3.25)		−0.19 (0.38)		0.34 (3.20)		−0.48 (0.36)	
× Female	5.66 (4.35)		−0.20 (0.55)		0.89 (4.57)		0.58 (0.52)		0.96 (4.38)		0.32 (0.51)	
× High congruence			−0.33 (0.54)				−0.06 (0.54)				0.55 (0.54)	
× Female × High congruence			0.88 (0.75)				−0.36 (0.75)				−0.31 (0.73)	
Hispanic MC	1.00 (3.19)		−0.02 (0.39)		−1.94 (3.21)		−0.30 (0.40)		1.06 (3.10)		−0.32 (0.37)	
× Female	4.61 (4.45)		0.40 (0.54)		4.03 (4.56)		0.58 (0.55)		−5.27 (4.42)		0.04 (0.53)	
× High congruence			0.09 (0.55)				−0.29 (0.55)				0.61 (0.53)	
× Female × High congruence			−0.35 (0.77)				0.09 (0.76)				−0.54 (0.74)	
High policy congruence	12.89 (2.58)	***	1.35 (0.39)	***	15.93 (2.63)	***	1.92 (0.39)	***	18.25 (2.59)	***	1.41 (0.38)	***
× Female	−1.14 (3.59)		−0.28 (0.54)		−8.10 (3.74)	*	−0.70 (0.53)		2.59 (3.61)		0.37 (0.51)	
Female	−3.95 (3.58)		0.01 (0.39)		1.77 (3.59)		0.24 (0.36)		0.31 (3.54)		0.10 (0.36)	
Threshold 1			−1.85 (0.30)	***			−1.45 (0.28)	***			−1.47 (0.27)	***
Threshold 2			−0.76 (0.28)	**			−0.53 (0.27)	^			−0.41 (0.26)	
Threshold 3			1.68 (0.29)	***			1.87 (0.29)	***			1.87 (0.27)	***
Threshold 4			4.18 (0.36)	***			3.97 (0.33)	***			4.09 (0.32)	***
N	567		612		557		596		581		613	
R^2	.08				.07				.17			
Log-likelihood			−747.61				−755.09				−783.50	

Note: Excluded experimental conditions are White MC and low policy congruence. Approval of MC is coded as 1 (Strongly disapprove), 2 (Somewhat disapprove), 3 (Neither approve nor disapprove), 4 (Somewhat approve), 5 (Strongly approve). ^p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table A5: Regression models including each policy area separately, by the race of the respondent

	Black respondents		Hispanic respondents		White respondents	
	Perceived congruence (OLS)	Job approval (Ordered logit)	Perceived congruence (OLS)	Job approval (Ordered logit)	Perceived congruence (OLS)	Job approval (Ordered logit)
Intercept	29.44 (3.06) ***		28.53 (2.95) ***		29.46 (2.97) ***	
Congruence on healthcare	7.85 (3.27) *	0.37 (0.28)	7.96 (3.34) *	0.39 (0.28)	10.57 (3.27) **	0.64 (0.27) *
Congruence on stimulus	4.88 (3.44)	0.78 (0.29) **	1.37 (3.50)	0.27 (0.29)	6.52 (3.24) *	0.96 (0.27) ***
Congruence on taxes	4.61 (3.23)	0.16 (0.27)	−1.21 (3.40)	0.11 (0.28)	6.08 (3.15) ^	0.05 (0.26)
Congruence on immigration	−1.99 (3.58)	0.07 (0.30)	13.53 (3.33) ***	1.31 (0.28) ***	4.77 (3.27)	0.49 (0.28) ^
Congruence on profiling	7.91 (3.40) *	0.57 (0.30) ^	6.42 (3.27) ^	0.59 (0.28) *	5.89 (3.35) ^	0.62 (0.28) *
Black MC	7.59 (4.34) ^	0.10 (0.38)	5.56 (4.38)	0.19 (0.36)	2.56 (4.19)	−0.52 (0.35)
× Congruence on healthcare	−0.32 (4.74)	−0.23 (0.41)	−8.81 (4.81) ^	−0.08 (0.40)	−2.46 (4.63)	0.30 (0.39)
× Congruence on stimulus	−1.83 (4.65)	−0.29 (0.40)	1.37 (4.82)	−0.16 (0.40)	−1.01 (4.63)	−0.12 (0.38)
× Congruence on taxes	−3.00 (4.59)	0.38 (0.40)	9.38 (4.89) ^	0.38 (0.40)	0.63 (4.53)	0.44 (0.38)
× Congruence on immigration	6.50 (4.83)	0.58 (0.40)	−10.50 (4.78) *	−0.90 (0.39) *	3.12 (4.63)	0.40 (0.39)
× Congruence on profiling	−7.00 (4.64)	−0.17 (0.40)	−0.23 (4.68)	0.31 (0.39)	−4.32 (4.70)	−0.31 (0.39)
Hispanic MC	4.82 (4.25)	0.30 (0.37)	8.21 (4.43) ^	0.12 (0.37)	−2.07 (4.29)	−0.43 (0.37)
× Congruence on healthcare	1.18 (4.71)	0.47 (0.41)	−12.81 (4.79) **	−0.22 (0.40)	3.43 (4.67)	0.83 (0.39) *
× Congruence on stimulus	−0.44 (4.85)	−0.62 (0.41)	−1.41 (4.80)	−0.16 (0.40)	−8.88 (4.72) ^	−0.72 (0.39) ^
× Congruence on taxes	−6.27 (4.76)	0.12 (0.40)	3.30 (4.86)	0.01 (0.40)	−0.53 (4.61)	0.36 (0.39)
× Congruence on immigration	6.66 (4.84)	0.53 (0.41)	−5.67 (4.75)	−0.24 (0.40)	2.67 (4.62)	−0.21 (0.39)
× Congruence on profiling	−1.90 (4.71)	−0.62 (0.41)	1.56 (4.65)	0.15 (0.40)	4.53 (4.75)	0.29 (0.40)
Threshold 1		−1.47 (0.29) ***		−1.02 (0.26) ***		−1.03 (0.26) ***
Threshold 2		−0.36 (0.27)		−0.10 (0.25)		0.05 (0.25)
Threshold 3		2.10 (0.29) ***		2.33 (0.27) ***		2.38 (0.28) ***
Threshold 4		4.60 (0.35) ***		4.44 (0.32) ***		4.62 (0.33) ***
N	567	612	557	596	581	613
R^2	.08		.09		.17	
Log-likelihood		−744.26		−749.61		−774.96

Note: Excluded experimental conditions are White MC and disagreement on each of the policy areas. Approval of MC is coded as 1 (Strongly disapprove), 2 (Somewhat disapprove), 3 (Neither approve nor disapprove), 4 (Somewhat approve), 5 (Strongly approve). ^p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Responses to representation on racial policy

To test whether the descriptive representation of race has a particularly strong effect on responses to substantive representation on racial policy, I re-estimated versions of the models from Tables 1 and 2. These new models, shown in Table A5, replicate the "(a)" ones from earlier, this time substituting congruence on each policy individually rather than the aggregated low/high conditions. I leave out the voter's education and ideology in the interests of brevity; including these further interaction terms does not affect the results.

Note that the critical test here is whether constituents' responses to racial policy areas are affected more by the MC's race than their responses to non-racial policy areas are. This is assessed by interacting each policy with the MC's race. If descriptive representation matters most for issues of race, then the interaction between the MC's race and his position on immigration or profiling should be significantly larger than the interaction between his race and his positions on the other issues. The results in Table A5, however, show that this is largely not the case.

Take racial profiling. The main term suggests that agreement on this policy led to increased perceptions of overall congruence and greater approval amongst all voters. The insignificant interactions between agreement on profiling and the race of the MC, however, show that the importance of the issue for voters' evaluations did *not* vary with the MC's race. For example, among Black voters, agreement with the MC's position on profiling significantly increased perceived congruence (β=7.91, SE=3.40) and approval ratings (β=.57, SE=.30). This is the estimated effect for White MCs, the excluded category. The interaction terms are insignificant, indicating no difference between the effect of the White MC's position and the Black (β=−7.00, SE=4.64 in the perceived congruence model, β=−.17, SE=.40 in the approval model) or Hispanic (β=−1.90, SE=4.71; β=−.62, SE=.41) MC's position. Across all groups of respondents, the position the Black and Hispanic MCs took on racial profiling were factored into perceptions of congruence and job evaluations to the same extent as the positions White MCs took on the issue.

Amongst Black and White voters, the same results are found for immigration: the position the MC took is factored into evaluations at the same rate no matter his race. For Hispanic voters, there are some

differences across MCs, although they do not seem to be the result of descriptive representation per se. The *lack* of a significant interaction between the Hispanic MC and congruence on immigration shows that Hispanics responded to Hispanic and White MCs' positions in the same way (β=−5.67, SE=4.75 for perceptions; β=−.24, SE=.40 for approval). When evaluating Black MCs, however, Hispanics placed *less* weight on their immigration position than when evaluating White MCs (for perceptions, β=−10.50, SE=4.78; for approval, β=−.90, SE=.39). Perceptions of congruence with and approval of the Black MC were *less* sensitive to his position on immigration than evaluations of White MCs. This is the only significant interaction for the racial policy positions, and cannot be explained easily by theories of descriptive representation since the Hispanic and White MCs were evaluated identically by Hispanic voters in this regard.

There are indications that different racial groups prioritize different issues in assessing MCs. Hispanics placed greater weight on the MC's immigration position than Blacks or Whites did. Likewise, Blacks factored the MC's position on profiling into their evaluations at high rates (particularly in perceptions of the MC's overall congruence). In this case, however, they are not particularly distinctive: Hispanics and Whites *also* weighed the MC's profiling position heavily in their evaluations.

Critically for the purposes of this paper, though, there is scant evidence that the descriptive representation of race affects responses to congruence on racial issues particularly strongly. While the overall importance of different issues varied across racial groups, responses to the MC's position on them were not driven by his race. With the one exception of Hispanics placing less weight on immigration policy when evaluating the Black MC, his race made no differences to the importance of racial issues for evaluations. In short, the descriptive representation of race does not have a particularly strong effect when discussing matters of racial policy.

Survey items

Policy questions

Health care reform: From what you know about it, do you favor or oppose the health care reform bill that Congress and the President passed last year?

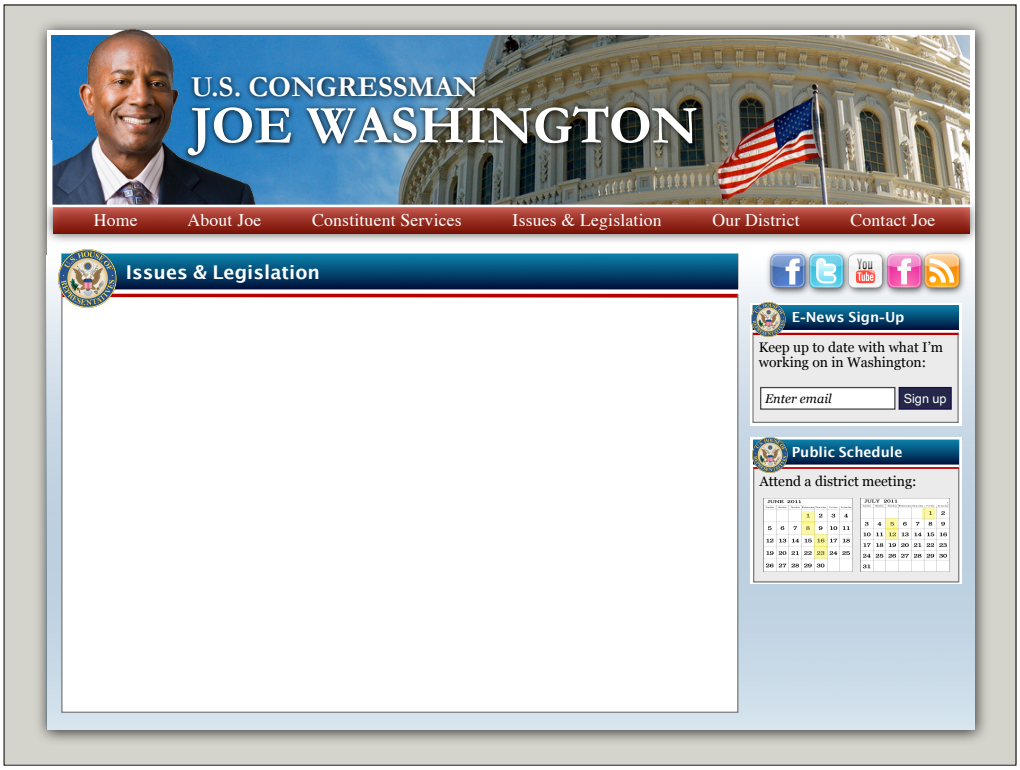
Stimulus: Do you approve or disapprove of the federal government's stimulus funding of technology, energy, and transportation programs in an effort to create jobs and boost the economy?

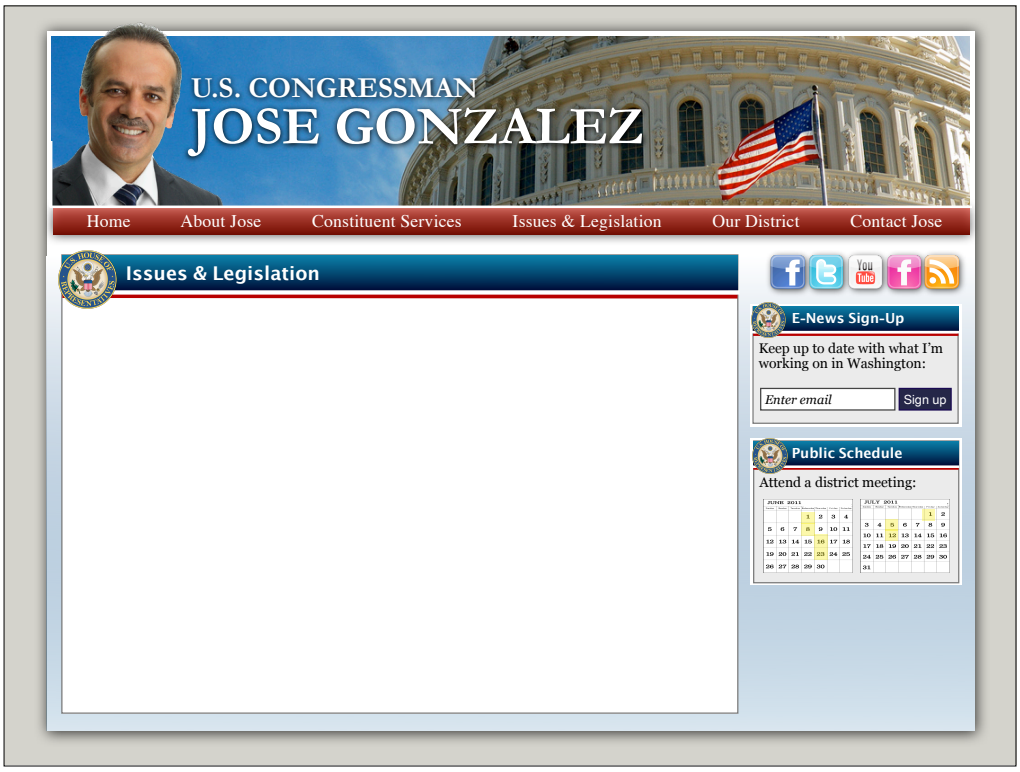
Immigration reform: Do you favor or oppose creating a way for illegal immigrants currently living and working in the U.S. to gain legal citizenship?

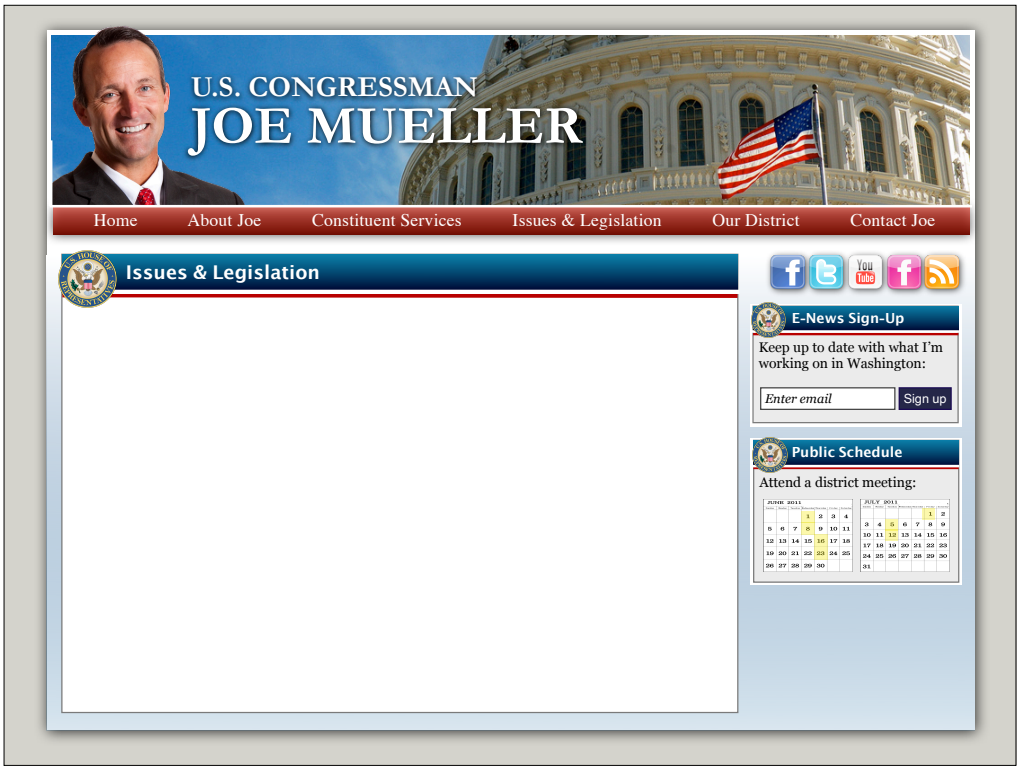
Taxes: Would you support or oppose increasing taxes on households that earn $250,000 a year or more as a way of decreasing the federal budget deficit?

Racial profiling: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "It is sometimes justified for police to use racial or ethnic profiling when stopping passengers at airport security checkpoints".

MC website images




U.S. CONGRESSMAN
JOSE GONZALEZ
Home
About Jose
Constituent Services
Issues & Legislation
Our District
Contact Jose
Issues & Legislation
E-News Sign-Up
Keep up to date with what I'm working on in Washington:
Enter email
Sign up
Public Schedule
Attend a district meeting:


U.S. CONGRESSMAN
JOE MUELLER
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Constituent Services
Issues & Legislation
Our District
Contact Joe
Issues & Legislation
E-News Sign-Up
Keep up to date with what I'm working on in Washington:
Enter email
Sign up
Public Schedule
Attend a district meeting:

MC positions

The MC's policy positions were randomly varied between either a pro- or anti- position to each of the five bills shown above:

Congressman [last name] continues to work on the major legislation that matters most to our district, including:

[**Pro-health care reform**] Leading the fight for the health care reform bill that Congress passed in 2010.

[**Anti-health care reform**] Leading the fight against the health care reform bill that Congress passed in 2010.

[**Pro-stimulus**] Voting for the jobs stimulus that pumped federal dollars into vital local construction and transportation projects.

[**Anti-stimulus**] Voting against the jobs stimulus that wasted federal dollars on unnecessary local construction and transportation projects.

[**Pro-immigration reform**] Supporting a comprehensive immigration reform bill that provides illegal immigrants currently living in the U.S. with a path to citizenship.

[**Anti-immigration reform**] Opposing a comprehensive immigration reform bill that provides illegal immigrants currently living in the U.S. with a path to citizenship.

[**Pro-tax increases**] Negotiating a budget deficit deal to end the Bush tax cuts for wealthy Americans and cut federal spending.

[**Anti-tax increases**] Negotiating a budget deficit deal to extend the Bush tax cuts for all Americans and cut federal spending.

[**Pro-racial profiling**] Writing the Common-Sense Policing Act that allows law enforcement officials to use racial profiling when investigating terrorists or criminals.

[**Anti-racial profiling**] Writing the Common-Sense Policing Act that stops law enforcement officials from using racial profiling when investigating terrorists or criminals.