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Race, Ethnicity, and U.S. House Incumbent Evaluations

This article considers evaluations of U.S. House incumbents under conditions of racial/ethnic congruence and incongruence. We consider whether different racial groups have ordered preferences among nondescriptive alternatives. We pose two theoretical models of descriptive representation and test them using pooled National Election Study data. After controlling for the propensity to recall the Member of Congress, we find the extent of favoritism towards descriptive representatives varies across groups, as does the preference ordering among representatives of different racial and ethnic identification. No evidence of race-based judgment is uncovered among African Americans, while Latinos and Whites demonstrate preferences based on race and ethnicity.

Introduction

The concept of descriptive representation—the idea that a representative possesses an essential attribute linking her to a group whose members also possess the attribute—has received considerable scholarly attention. Research in this area, highlighted by the important works of Canon (1999), Lublin (1997) and others, has focused both on the electoral success of minority candidates and the implications of greater minority representation. There is some evidence that the mere presence of descriptive representation—independent of policy-based indicators of performance—affects constituents in meaningful ways. Americans represented by a member of their own racial or ethnic group report more positive attitudes towards the political system, higher levels of political engagement, and, in some cases, participate more in political life (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Gay 2002). These findings suggest descriptive representation contributes to ingroup favoritism and a minority empowerment effect—though the scope of these effects and the conditions under which they emerge is subject to debate.

In this article, we examine the identity politics surrounding U.S. House incumbent evaluations. The racial and ethnic dimension of these judgments has taken on increasing importance as the U.S. population has become more diverse. Electoral arrangements, particularly single-member districts, constrain descriptive representation such that some groups are invariably represented by a member of another group. We consider how individuals not only evaluate politicians sharing a common racial/ethnic identity, but also politicians with a different identity. We argue that an essential connection between the representative and the represented will contribute to an ingroup bias based on constituent assumptions that shared group membership corresponds to shared interests. Thus, the descriptive cue is a rational shortcut used to infer information about the legislator that may otherwise be costly to obtain (Bianco 1994; Segura and Bowler 2005).

What if an individual is not represented by a member of her own racial or ethnic group? Do whites prefer to be represented by a black legislator more than a Latino legislator (or vice versa)? Do Latino constituents more favorably evaluate an African American representative than a white representative? Or will individuals be indifferent among nondescriptive options, favoring their own group and that group alone? Given a common minority status and greater ideological proximity, one might expect African Americans (Latinos) to prefer representation by a Latino (African American) legislator to representation by a white legislator. Alternatively, work on the "black-brown divide" suggests competition and animosity among minority groups will contribute to unfavorable ratings of Latino representatives by blacks and black representatives by Latinos.

Our analysis suggests race-based judgments of House incumbents vary in interesting and consequential ways. The ability to recall the name of one's member of congress (henceforth MC), willingness to evaluate the MC, and the favorability of the evaluation all point to group-based perceptual biases. Controlling for the propensity to recognize and evaluate one's own MC, we find that an MC's race/ethnicity influences evaluations made by white and Latino respondents. African Americans' evaluations, alternatively, are not race based. These results afford insight into the dynamics of representation in the U.S. House and point to complex processes that cannot be explained by ingroup favoritism alone.

Dyadic Descriptive Representation

The original conceptualization of descriptive representation considered whether the composition of a governing body on the whole

represented the characteristics of the governed (Pitkin 1967). Weissberg (1978) distinguished between *collective* representation and *dyadic* representation, which is concerned with how well a specific legislator represents his or her constituents. Dyadic representation takes on particular importance given the way institutional context constrains descriptive representation in the United States: legislators are elected from single-member districts by plurality voting. As there is only one representative per district, descriptive representation is limited to the essential attribute (race/ethnicity) of that one legislator.

Much of the work relating descriptive representation to public opinion and behavior focuses on dyadic representation. For instance, Bobo and Gilliam (1990) found the presence of a black mayor corresponded to higher levels of attention to politics, political efficacy, and political participation among blacks. They attributed this to a minority empowerment effect, a set of psychological benefits stemming from the presence of group members in positions of authority. There is also some evidence that individuals are inclined to view their descriptive representative in a more favorable light. Several works find black respondents rate black elected officials more favorably than white respondents (e.g., Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Howell and Perry 2000; Tate 2001). Alternatively, Gay (2002) finds no significant difference in black evaluations of black and white MCs. However, whites rate black MCs less favorably than white MCs.

Though this literature focuses on differences between white and African American evaluations of white and African American MCs, there is some evidence that Latinos are likewise affected by descriptive representation. For instance, Pantoja and Segura (2002) find that the presence of Latinos in the state assembly, state senate, or U.S. House reduced political alienation among Latinos in Texas and California. Barreto, Segura, and Woods (2004; Barreto 2007) report a link between representation and the political mobilization of Latinos, consistent with Bobo and Gilliam's (1990) work on minority empowerment among African Americans.

Limitations of Existing Research

While this literature suggests descriptive representation has important attitudinal/behavioral implications for both minorities and whites, it suffers from a few limitations. First, the time-period covered by many of these studies does not extend much past the mid-1990s.[1] The 1992 redistricting period introduced several majority-minority districts resulting in large gains in minority representation (Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Endersby and Menifeld 2000). This study builds on existing

work by extending the time frame well past the 1992 redistricting period—to 2008. This allows us to incorporate more information about African American MCs and particularly Latino MCs, as the number of Latino MCs increased substantially in recent years: from 11 in 1990 to 24 in 2008.

Second, the methodological approach used to examine MC evaluations fails to consider the contingent nature of evaluations on incumbent recall and willingness to evaluate. Banducci, Donovan, and Karp (2004) examine the importance of MC recall and find that black respondents were more likely to recall the name of black MCs than white MCs. However, the authors treat recall as a separate issue from evaluation. This is problematic given only respondents who recall or recognize the name of their MC are asked to evaluate her. In order to more fully assess the relationship between respondent race/ethnicity and MC race/ethnicity on incumbent evaluations, we use an approach that accounts for the selection bias posed by failing to recall one's incumbent and refusing to evaluate one's incumbent.

Finally, existing research tends to treat descriptive representation as a binary concept: black or white, ingroup or outgroup. It fails to account for the country's growing diversity. In the past few decades, the Latino population has dramatically increased. The 2010 Census indicates Latinos comprise 16% of the population, surpassing African Americans as the largest minority group. Not only has the Latino population increased, but the number of Latino elected officials has likewise increased. Historically, outgroup representation may have largely been characterized as African Americans represented by a white MC or whites represented by a black MC. Given the growing Latino population and growing number of Latino MCs, many Latinos are represented by non-Latino MCs, while an increasing number of whites and blacks are represented by Latino MCs. Thus, it is important to extend the focus to include Latinos.

Beyond the Binary

The following model offers a binary conceptualization of representation, which depicts the idea that motivates extant research on this topic. We have a *White* and *Black* legislator. The *White* legislator has the essential racial attribute that is important to white constituents, group G_W. Similarly, the *Black* legislator possesses the essential racial attribute that is important to black constituents, G_B. Given the dyadic structure of representation, a purely descriptive representation "model" would predict:

$$White \quad P_W \quad Black \quad \forall \quad G_W$$
$$Black \quad P_B \quad White \quad \forall \quad G_B \qquad [1]$$

This is a simplification—there is no evidence that all group members always demonstrate an ingroup bias. Nonetheless, it illustrates the binary preference relation stemming from the principle of descriptive representation. In terms of candidate evaluations, individuals from G_W would rate a *White* MC more highly; individuals from G_B would rate a *Black* MC more highly. This is the premise motivating most of the extant work on dyadic descriptive representation (e.g., Gay 2002). Given the growth of the Latino population, this binary relation does not reflect many realistic settings in American politics. As such, we include a third candidate, *Latino* MC, who has the essential ethnic attribute that is important to Latino constituents, G_L. A "model" of purely descriptive representation would now predict:

$$Black \quad P_B \quad White \quad I_B \quad Latino \quad \forall \quad G_B$$
$$Latino \quad P_L \quad Black \quad I_L \quad White \quad \forall \quad G_L \qquad [2]$$
$$White \quad P_W \quad Black \quad I_W \quad Latino \quad \forall \quad G_W$$

where *I* denotes an indifference relation. We posit an indifference relation under the assumption that if the preferred candidate—the one possessing the essential racial/ethnic attribute—is not the legislator, group members will not, *on the grounds of descriptive attributes*, have a basis to prefer one outgroup over the other. This is a stark rendering of ingroup, outgroup differences: you're either with us or against us.

In the absence of a descriptive MC, are individuals truly indifferent, or is there a "next best choice" in racial terms? This question speaks to the ways in which the expanding heterogeneity of the population, coupled with the growing number of Latino MCs, has rendered traditional "binary" notions of descriptive representation (i.e., Model [1]) less useful than in previous periods. It is more common for sizable populations of one racial/ethnic group to have an MC of a *different* racial/ethnic group. Given these dynamics, it is important to consider how individuals from one racial/ethnic group distinguish between MCs of other racial/ethnic groups.

Among white Americans, for whom race features prominently in MC evaluations (Gay 2002), we expect the historical legacy of racial tension to result in lower ratings for black MCs than for Latino MCs.

Expectations for the preference orderings of Latinos and African Americans are less clear. Research on the "black-brown divide" suggests competition over scarce resources, including political offices, has driven a wedge between black and Latino communities (Hero and Clarke 2003; McClain and Stewart 2002; Meier et al. 2004). This animosity stemming from intergroup conflict might cause group members to prefer representation by white MCs over representation from the other minority group.

The shared interests perspective, by contrast, suggests African Americans and Latinos are natural political allies, motivated by the broader goal of minority incorporation (see Kaufmann 2003). Given their common minority status and overlapping political agendas, either minority group may prefer to be represented by an MC of the other minority group rather than by a white MC (Kaufmann 2004). Dovi (2002) provides some additional theoretical justification for this claim. She distinguishes between "preferable" descriptive representation and "standard" descriptive representation, which is defined by a shared essential characteristic. Preferable descriptive representation is determined by the presence of "strong mutual relationships" between groups. To the extent that minority groups have these mutual relationships, representation by a member of another minority group might prove to be a minority constituent's "second best choice."

The ideological proximity of Latino and African American MCs supports this idea of preferable descriptive representation. Constituents often use minority racial/ethnic identity as a proxy for liberalism (Kanthak and Morton 2008; McDermott 1998). For minority constituents, the closer proximity of another minority group MC may reflect common political interests and contribute to a preference for a non-descriptive minority MC over a white MC. Constituent perceptions of minority MCs' liberalism have some basis in fact. Consider Poole and Rosenthal's (1996) DW-NOMINATE scores of MCs serving in the 97th through 110th Congresses.[2] Table 1 presents the median and average nominate score (along with the interquartile range [iqr] and standard deviation).

The top panel of Table 1 demonstrates ideological differences between racial/ethnic minority MCs and white MCs. Black MCs are the most liberal of this group with a median NOMINATE score of .53, while white MCs are the most conservative with a median NOMINATE score of −.02. Latino MCs fall in between with a median score of .37, but are ideologically closer to black MCs than white MCs. Given that there are only a handful of black or Latino Republican MCs (4 and 6, respectively) serving between the 97th and 110th Congresses, a better comparison of ideological placement is among Democratic MCs, presented in the

TABLE 1
Ideology Estimates for Incumbents
Controlling for Race, Ethnicity, and Party

| | Incumbent Ideology | | |
	Black	Latino	Anglo
All Incumbents			
Mean (s.d.)	.51 (.19)	.28 (.32)	−.05 (.40)
Median (i.q.r)	.53 (.16)	.37 (.24)	−.02 (.73)
N Cases	376	188	4656
Democrats			
Mean (s.d.)	.53 (.11)	.41 (.14)	.28 (.21)
Median (i.q.r)	.53 (.13)	.39 (.20)	.31 (.23)
N Cases	348	151	2341

Note: Incumbent ideology scores are Poole-Rosenthal DW-NOMINATE Scores (first dimension). The first row reflects the mean and standard deviation, and the second row indicates the median value and the interquartile range. The third row indicates the number of cases within each group.

second panel of Table 1. The distance between white *Democratic* MCs and black and Latino *Democratic* MCs is far less than previously estimated. Black MCs' median placement is still the most liberal, scoring a .53. Latino MCs' median score is .39, and white MCs' median placement is .31. A similar story is told if we look at mean placement. Further, a comparison of means between the groups using a *t*-test shows significant differences in mean ideological scores.[3] Partisan affiliation (Democrat or Republican) of an MC does a good job of predicting ideological location; however, the essential attribute of race/ethnicity has clear value added. Knowing this information leads to a ideological rank-ordering of legislators along racial and ethnic lines. The ideological proximity of Latino and African American MCs suggests their constituencies may have shared interests or preferences. Moreover, this ideological proximity may contribute to a preference for a nondescriptive minority MC over a white MC.

Returning to our formalization of preference rankings among these groups, we can extend [2] by no longer assuming the indifference relation. It is assumed that group members will prefer a candidate from their own group to one who is not; however, it is likely other factors *also* impact the preference calculus of group members. As noted, given the historical racial tension, we expect that a black MC would be least favorably evaluated by most whites compared to a Latino MC. However, for minority groups there are two competing perspectives: "black-brown

divide" and "shared interests." This leads to two sets of preferences orderings, [3] and [4]:

$$
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\textit{Black} & P_B & \textit{White} & P_B & \textit{Latino} & \forall & G_B \\
\textit{Latino} & P_L & \textit{White} & P_L & \textit{Black} & \forall & G_L & [3] \\
\textit{White} & P_W & \textit{Latino} & P_W & \textit{Black} & \forall & G_W
\end{array}
$$

$$
\begin{array}{llllllll}
\textit{Black} & P_B & \textit{Latino} & P_B & \textit{White} & \forall & G_B \\
\textit{Latino} & P_L & \textit{Black} & P_L & \textit{White} & \forall & G_L & [4] \\
\textit{White} & P_W & \textit{Latino} & P_W & \textit{Black} & \forall & G_W
\end{array}
$$

Models [3] and [4] reflect a clear ingroup preference, but there are important distinctions among outgroup MCs. Model [3] reflects the "black-brown divide" such that we might expect a black MC to be less favorably evaluated by most Latinos when compared to a white MC and a Latino MC to be less favorably evaluated by most African Americans when compared to a white MC. Alternatively, Model [4] reflects "shared interest" perspective, where we might expect that a white MC would be less favorably evaluated by most Latinos compared to a black MC and a white MC would be less favorably rated by most African Americans compared to a Latino MC.

Data and Analysis

To examine evaluations of MCs as a function of the race/ethnicity of the respondent and the race of the MC, we utilize National Election Studies (hereafter, NES) survey data from 1982 through 2008.[4] These data include a survey item querying individuals about their MC, as well as an item that identifies the congressional district in which each respondent resides. This survey data is then merged with data on each incumbent. The incumbent data consist of the Poole-Rosenthal DW-NOMINATE score (first dimension), the race/ethnicity of the incumbent, and the number of terms served by the incumbent in the U.S. House.

The dependent variable is the NES feeling thermometer toward a *Democratic* MC.[5] The measure ranges between 0 and 100, where higher values reflect more positive affect toward the incumbent.[6] There are too few African American respondents represented by a Latino MC in the data set to reliably estimate quantities of interest. As such, the analysis is

FIGURE 1
Predicted Democratic MC Evaluations
Controlling for Race
(estimates are from a constant-only regression model)

Incumbent Feeling Thermometer
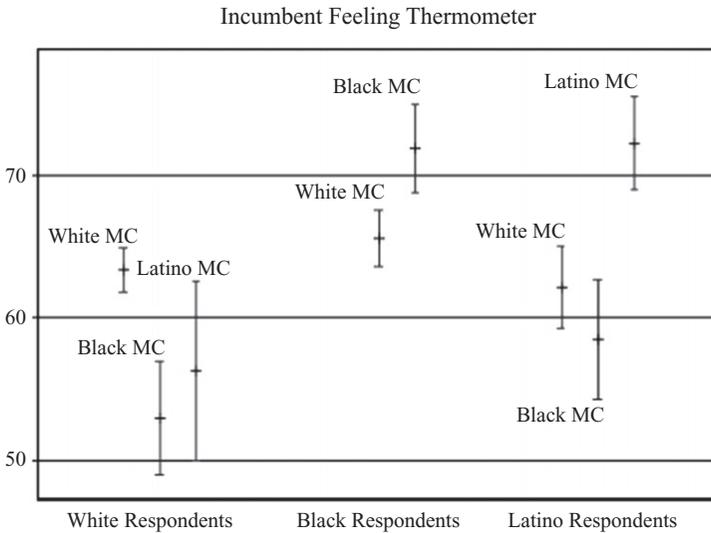
Note: This figure gives the predicted MC evaluation along with the 95% upper and lower bound estimate controlling for race and ethnicity of the incumbent and respondent.

confined to African American evaluations of black and white MCs. To begin our analysis, Figure 1 plots the predicted Democratic MC evaluations controlling for race (estimates are from a constant-only regression model) along with the 95% confidence intervals. For white respondents, the estimated evaluation of white MCs is 63.34; for black respondents, the predicted evaluation for black MCs is 71.86; and for Latino respondents, the estimated rating of Latino MCs is 72.19.

Figure 1 demonstrates that evaluations of the ingroup MCs are generally much higher than for outgroup MCs. This is most clearly evinced among black and Latino respondents: blacks rate more highly black MCs, and Latinos rate more highly Latino MCs. With respect to the "ordering" of outgroup MC evaluations for white and Latino respondents, the story is less clear. For white respondents, the mean rating for black MCs is lower than for Latino MCs; for Latino respondents, the mean evaluation for black MCs is lower than for white MCs. However, in both cases the confidence intervals for outgroup MCs overlap. In sum, Figure 1 provides some evidence for Model [2] but leaves open the question of what

factors account for variation in MC evaluations. Nevertheless, one take-away from Figure 1 is that a stark portrayal of MC evaluations as being solely driven by descriptive ties does not seem to hold.

In modeling MC evaluations, we estimate separate models for white respondents, black respondents, and Latino respondents. In these models (i.e., on the right-hand side), we control for the race/ethnicity of the *MC*. We chose to estimate separate models for each group because this approach allows us to examine differences in MC evaluations within each racial/ethnic group. One complication with these data is missing data on the response variable, that is, the incumbent feeling thermometer. In asking for their ratings of the MC, respondents are first asked if they "recognize" the MC's name. If not, the item is not asked, and we have missing data for this respondent. If the respondent recognizes the MC's name, he/she is then asked to rate the MC on the 101-point feeling thermometer. If the respondent refuses to rate, we also obtain missing data for the respondent. These two survey probes yield a considerable amount of missing data; approximately 18% (1,811 respondents) did not render an evaluation of their MC.[7]

Moreover, the distribution of missing data varies across racial/ethnic groups. Fifteen percent of white respondents did not evaluate their MC, while 24% of black respondents and 23% of Latino respondents did not evaluate their MC. Furthermore, missing data is less likely to occur when the MC and respondent are of the same racial/ethnic group than compared to when the race/ethnicity of the respondent and MC differ. For example, 14% of white respondents did not evaluate their white incumbent, while 18% of white respondents did not evaluate their black incumbent, and 26% of white respondents did not evaluate their Latino representative. Among black respondents, 17% did not evaluate their black incumbent, while 28% did not evaluate their white incumbent. Among Latino respondents, 15% did not evaluate their Latino incumbent, while 30% did not evaluate their white incumbent, and 34% did not evaluate their black incumbent.

The patterns of nonresponse suggest respondents are more likely to rate an MC of their own race/ethnicity as opposed to outgroup MCs. Therefore we are faced with a set of MC evaluations observed for a nonrandom sample of respondents. If unaccounted for, the parameter estimates will be biased, and the error terms will be correlated with the independent variables (Heckman 1979). This may lead to erroneous conclusions regarding the influence of race/ethnicity on MC evaluations. To address the dual nature of the selection process, we implement a Heckman "style" approach. The usual Heckman selection model employs a probit "selection" equation modeling whether or not the

sample element is in the outcome model and then from the probit computes the inverse mills ratio (IMR).[8] The IMR is then included as a predictor in an outcome model, usually treated as a "correction" for selection bias.[9] Because we have two modes of selection, we estimate separate probits for: (1) "not recognizing" (scored "1") versus "recognizing and/or rating" (scored "0") and (2) "recognizing but not rating" (scored "1") versus "rating" the MC (scored "0"). For each model, the IMR is computed and treated as a predictor variable in our outcome models.[10] As we will show, there are some systematic factors that predict the pattern of missing data.

As noted we have three sets of models: the two selection models and the outcome model. The selection models and the outcome model include two main covariates of interest: race/ethnicity of the incumbent and strength of partisanship. Dichotomous variables are used to denote the respondents' and MCs' race/ethnicity (white, black, or Latino). Party affiliation is measured using the NES' 7-point scale where -1 represents a strong Republican and 1 represents a strong Democrat. Because the relationship between covariates may be conditional, for example, the relationship between an individual's partisan affiliation on the dependent variable may be conditioned by the race of the respondent; therefore, we first estimated models allowing race, ideology, and partisanship indicators to have conditional relationships with Y. As outlined by Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006), the magnitude and significance of an interaction cannot be determined based on the parameter estimate and standard error presented in the results table. Thus, we estimated the marginal effects and conditional standard errors (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006).[11] When the conditional effects did not hold, we estimated the unconditional model (i.e., models where insignificant interaction terms were omitted).[12] This strategy is used for all of the models discussed below (selection and outcome models). To control for potential location effects, the selection and outcome models also include a district-level control variable: percent urban.

In addition to these variables, the selection models also include an indicator of MC tenure, which is measured by the number of years in office. The expectation is that as tenure increases, the probability of "not recognizing" or "recognizing, but not rating" an incumbent should decrease: tenure implies greater exposure. The models also include a dichotomous measure indicating whether the congressional district in which a respondent resides has undergone redistricting. It is possible respondents residing in districts having undergone redistricting may not be familiar with the MC and thus less likely to evaluate the MC. Additionally, the models include three individual-level control variables:

education, female, and age. Education ranges from 1 (less than a high school degree) to 4 (college degree or more advanced degree). Female is a binary variable coded 1 if a respondent is a female (0 if male). A respondent's age is measured in years.

In addition to partisanship and race/ethnicity of the MC, the outcome model includes respondent and incumbent ideology measures. MC ideology is measured using the DW-NOMINATE scores and is scaled to fall in the range −1 (maximally conservative) to 1 (maximally liberal). The respondent's ideology is scored using the NES' 7-point ideology scale where −1 denotes an extreme conservative and 1 denotes an extreme liberal. Finally, the outcome model includes the inverse mill's ratio from both of the selection models: IMR 1 and IMR 2.

Table 2 gives the selection and outcome results for white, black, and Latino respondents. The first column gives the probit coefficients for the likelihood of "not recognizing" the incumbent versus not rating/ rating the incumbent. The second column gives the estimates for "not rating" the incumbent versus rating the incumbent. The response variable in these models is coded "1" if the respondent does not recognize or does not rate and "0" otherwise. Respondents who score a "0" over both models are the respondents who end up in the outcome model, which is shown in the third column. The first panel of results is for white respondents; the second panel presents the results for black respondents; and the third panel gives the results for Latino respondents. Below, we discuss the findings for white, black, and Latino respondents, respectively, and then give a deeper discussion of the results and their implications.

White Respondents

We begin by discussing the results for white respondents. In general, we find the pattern of missing data to be at least partially due to racial/ethnic characteristics of the MC. Consider respondents who claim to "not recognize" the MC. The results given in column 1 indicate white respondents are significantly more likely to not recognize (and therefore not rate) Latino MCs in comparison to white MCs. Additionally, this relationship is conditioned on one's partisan affiliation. Although the reported log-odds estimate of −.19 has a large standard error, the *conditional* effects are statistically significant. In general, respondents identifying with the Democratic party are more likely to recognize their Democratic MC compared to Republican and independent identifiers. In terms of the conditioning effect of MC race/ethnicity, the probability of a white Republican *not* evaluating a white MC is about .09, while the probability of not evaluating a Latino MC is about triple this, about .25.[13]

TABLE 2
Respondent Evaluations of Members of Congress
(models include robust standard errors)

	Selection Models		Outcome Model
White Respondents			
Black MC	.03 (.16)	−.03 (.18)	−7.03 (1.93)**
Latino MC	.49 (.22)*	.32 (.19)†	−3.48 (1.94)†
R's PID	−.06 (.03)†	−.11 (.04)**	8.09 (.66)**
Latino MC × R's PID	−.19 (.22)^C		
Black MC × R's PID			5.48 (2.43)^C
Education	−.25 (.03)**	−.18 (.03)**	
Female	.08 (.05)†	−.01 (.05)	
Age	−.02 (.00)**	−.00 (.00)*	
MC Tenure	−.01 (.00)**	−.01 (.00)*	
Redistricted	.29 (.31)	−.18 (.25)	
% Urban	.01 (.00)*	.00 (.00)	−.07 (.03)*
MC's Ideo			−5.16 (2.09)*
R's Ideo			5.85 (1.01)**
IMR Stage 1			15.56 (2.05)**
IMR Stage 2			−19.36 (3.84)**
Constant	−.41 (.19)*	−1.01 (.20)**	79.51 (5.28)**
Black Respondents			
White MC	.34 (.15)*	.28 (.15)†	−2.20 (2.54)
R's PID	−.15 (.07)*	−.34 (.08)**	8.54 (1.51)**
Education	−.26 (.04)**	−.25 (.06)**	
Female	.02 (.09)	.05 (.11)	
Age	−.01 (.00)**	.00 (.00)	
MC Tenure	.00 (.01)	−.01 (.01)	
Redistricted	.33 (.22)	−.39 (.51)	
% Urban	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	−.02 (.05)
MC's Ideo			4.29 (4.48)
R's Ideo			.38 (1.71)
IMR Stage 1			15.69 (4.65)**
IMR Stage 2			−8.27 (3.84)*
Constant	−.36 (.35)	−1.13 (.41)**	56.26 (6.96)**
Latino Respondents			
Black MC	.26 (.24)	.48 (.27)†	−13.33 (3.81)**
White MC	.30 (.16)†	.37 (.20)†	−7.48 (2.29)**
R's PID	−.20 (.08)*	−.11 (.11)	6.33 (1.93)**
Education	−.25 (.06)**	−.21 (.07)**	
Female	.13 (.11)	.02 (.16)	
Age	−.01 (.00)†	.00 (.01)	
MC Tenure	−.04 (.01)**	−.03 (.01)*	
Redistricted	.41 (.35)	−.50 (.45)	
% Urban	.02 (.00)**	−.00 (.00)	.21 (.13)
MC's Ideo			1.04 (5.04)
R's Ideo			−2.72 (2.40)
IMR Stage 1			20.85 (7.15)**
IMR Stage 2			−21.94 (9.89)*
Constant	−1.27 (.44)**	−.70 (.49)	59.50 (8.06)**

Note: C represents a conditional standard error. Number of cases, respectively: 7096, 1698, and 1095.
**$p < .01$; *$p < .05$; †$p < .10$

Yet, there is no significant difference in the probability of not recognizing a white or Latino MC among white Democratic party identifiers. That is, the conditioning effect holds, but only for self-declared independents and Republicans. With respect to black MCs, there is no significant difference in the probability of not recognizing a white MC or black MC among white respondents. There is no evidence of any conditioning effect due to party affiliation with respect to black MCs. Finally, apart from racial/ethnic characteristics of the MC, time-in-office is negatively related to nonrecognition of the MC: time served seems to increase the likelihood of MC recognition. Predictably, age and education lower the likelihood of nonrecognition of the MC. Finally, as the district-level percent urban measure increases the probability of a respondent not recognizing their MC also increases.

Next, we consider the probit model giving the likelihood a white respondent will "recognize but not rate" the MC versus "recognizing and rating the MC." The results suggest the likelihood of a white respondent recognizing but not evaluating a Latino MC is significantly higher than the probability of recognizing but not evaluating a white MC (one-tail *p*-value .05). The results indicate that the probability of a white Democratic respondent *not* evaluating a white MC is .04, while the probability of not evaluating a Latino MC is double this, about .08.[14] Finally, we see no discernible difference in the probability of a white respondent rating a black versus white MC. As such, there is some evidence descriptive ties matter (in terms of offering vs. not offering an evaluation), but this effect is conditioned on the race of the MC. As expected, partisanship is negatively and significantly related to the likelihood of a respondent not rating their MC: white Democrats are less likely of not rating than compared to independents and Republicans. MC tenure is negatively related to the likelihood of nonrating. Similarly age and education are negatively related to the likelihood the respondent does not rate the MC.

Now we turn to the model of MC evaluation for white respondents. In general, we find evidence that white respondents' evaluations of their MC vary as a function of the race/ethnicity of the MC. First, white respondents' ratings of Latino MCs are significantly lower when compared to the baseline category of white MCs (two-tailed *p*-value .06). Second, white respondents rate white MCs significantly higher than black MCs, but this relationship is conditioned on one's partisan affiliation. To demonstrate the nature of the relationship, we calculated point estimates of white respondents' evaluations of MCs as a function of the race or ethnicity of the MC. These point estimates are presented in Table 3. In the discussion that follows, we reference both the coefficients presented in Table 2 and the point estimates given in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Expected Value of Incumbent Evaluations and Change in Expected Values by Race of Incumbent

	Expected Values			Δ in Expected Values		
	White MC	Latino MC	Black MC	Δ White vs. Latino MC	Δ White vs. Black MC	Δ Latino vs. Black MC
White Respondent						
Democrat	71.17 (4.86)**	67.69 (5.70)**	69.61 (5.76)**		1.55 (3.04)	−1.93 (3.48)
Independent	63.07 (5.09)**	59.59 (5.92)**	56.04 (5.31)**	3.48 (1.93)†	7.03 (1.93)**	3.55 (2.62)
Republican	54.98 (5.40)**	51.50 (6.21)**	42.47 (5.87)**		12.50 (3.18)**	9.03 (3.67)*
Black Respondent						
Democrat	70.67 (7.47)**		72.88 (5.69)**			
Independent	62.13 (8.08)**	—	64.34 (6.37)**	—	−2.20 (2.54)	
Republican	53.60 (8.90)**		55.80 (7.29)**			
Latino Respondent						
Democrat	67.63 (8.40)**	75.10 (7.49)**	61.77 (7.85)**			
Independent	61.30 (9.37)**	68.77 (8.47)**	55.44 (8.77)**	−7.48 (2.29)**	5.85 (3.50)†	13.33 (3.81)**
Republican	54.97 (10.61)**	62.44 (9.74)**	49.11 (10.00)**			

Note: Expected values of Incumbent Evaluations are based on the OLS regression coefficients with robust standard errors presented in Table 2. Standard Errors are presented in the parentheses. Δ in expected value give the difference in the incumbent evaluations across the race of the incumbent. Standard errors on the Δ in expected value are presented in the parentheses. The NOMINATE score for white respondents is set to .27, the NOMINATE score for black respondents is set to .35, and the NOMINATE score for Latino respondents is set to .32. Respondent ideology is set to moderate. IMR Stages 1 and 2 are both set to the mean value. Two-tailed p-values: **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$; †$p < .10$.

The results lend evidence to an ingroup preference: white respondents evaluate white MCs higher than minority MCs. White evaluations of Latino MCs are on average about 3.5 points lower than their evaluations of white MCs. For example, the expected evaluation of a white MC for a moderate Democrat is 71.17, while the expected evaluation for a Latino MC is about 67.69. Further, a subset of white respondents evaluate white MCs significantly more positively than black MCs. There is no significant difference in white Democrats' evaluation of black and white MCs; however, there are significant differences in evaluations of black and white MCs among independents and Republicans.[15] For example, among white independents, evaluations of a black MC is about 7 points lower than a white MC, while among Republicans the average evaluation of a black MC is about 13 points lower than for a white MC.

Further, the estimates lend some evidence of "ordering" in evaluations. Specifically, white non-Democrats evaluate black MCs significantly lower than Latino MCs. White independents' evaluation of a black MC is on average about 4 points lower than evaluations of a Latino MC (one-tail p-value .08),[16] while among Republicans the difference is 9 points. The theoretical model given in Model [3] seems consistent with these results. The model also suggests that partisanship and ideology are associated with MC evaluations. White Democrats offer more positive evaluations of Democratic MCs than white non-Democrats, while liberal respondents rate Democratic MCs more favorably than conservative respondents. White respondent evaluations are also sensitive to MC ideology: more liberal MCs tend to be less favorably evaluated than more conservative MCs.

Finally, the IMR coefficients suggest there is a significant selection effect: white respondents' evaluations are *not* drawn from a random subset of all white respondents. More specifically, large IMR values suggest the selection hazard is associated with *lower* probabilities of "selecting out" of the outcome model, while smaller values suggest the selection hazard is associated with *higher* probabilities of "selecting out" of the outcome model.[17] Therefore, a positive coefficient for the IMR implies respondents with *lower selection probabilities* give higher ratings and those with *higher selection probabilities* give lower ratings. As such, a positive IMR indicates that estimates of evaluations are positively biased, and a negative IMR indicates estimates of evaluations are negatively biased. For the first-stage model, the positive coefficient suggests the selection effect actually serves to *lower* MC ratings. On average, a one-unit increase on the first-stage IMR leads to about a 16-point higher evaluation of the MC. For the second-stage model, the estimated IMR coefficient is negative implying those with the lowest selection

probabilities give lower MC ratings compared to respondents having high-selection probabilities. Thus, on average, a one-unit increase on the second-stage IMR leads to a 19-point lower evaluation of the MC.

Black Respondents

Next, we consider black respondent MC evaluations.[18] We find evidence that the pattern of missing data among black respondents is at least partly driven by the race of the MC. The first column of estimates presents the results for the first-stage selection model. There is a significant difference in MC recognition for a black MC versus a white MC. The positive coefficient on white MC (.31) suggests black respondents are more likely to "not recognize" a white MC than a black MC. Indeed, the probability of a black independent respondent not evaluating a black MC is .14, while the probability of not evaluating a white MC is .23. Partisan affiliation with the Democratic party lowers the likelihood of nonrecognition of the MC. Respondent education and age, as we saw with white respondents, are strong predictors of MC recognition. As age and education level increase, the probability of nonrecognition decreases.

The second selection model presented in column 2 indicates there is a marginally significant difference (two-tailed *p*-value .06) in the likelihood of a black respondent evaluating a black MC versus a white MC. The probability of black-independent respondent recognizing but not evaluating a black MC is .08, while the probability of not evaluating a white MC is .13. Substantively, this suggests that among black respondents, missing data due to "not rating" an MC is related to the race of the MC. Again, we see that partisan affiliation is associated with black respondents' evaluation of their MC. Black respondents who identify with the Democratic party are more likely to evaluate their MC compared to respondents who do not identify with the Democratic party. Education also strongly accounts for the pattern of missing data: the better educated tend to both recognize and rate the MC.

Now we consider black respondents' evaluations of their MC. The results (column 3 in Table 2 and point estimates in Table 3) indicate there is no significant difference in black respondents' evaluations of black and white MCs. Thus, there is *no evidence* that race is associated with attitudes among blacks toward Democratic MCs. Contrary to a model positing clear ingroup bias, this model shows that judgment seems invariant to MC race. The results *do* indicate partisan affiliation is significantly associated with black evaluations of MCs: blacks identifying with the Democratic party rate MCs higher than black respondents who identify

themselves as independent or Republican. In short, evaluations among black constituents are primarily driven by partisan attachment and not race. The IMRs for the model are also significant, suggesting the mechanisms producing missing data are related to judgment. The signs on the IMRs are similar to those found for white respondents' evaluations and thus the general interpretation of them is similar.

Latino Respondents

Now we turn to Latino respondents' MC evaluations. There is some evidence that the pattern of missing data is at least partly driven by racial/ethnic characteristics of the MC. The results for the first selection model, indicate that the probability of "not recognizing" a white MC is higher than the probability of "not recognizing" a Latino MC (the two-tailed *p*-value is .06). Thus, in the outcome model, we observe a systematic pattern of missing data whereby Latinos represented by a Latino MC are *less* likely to claim nonrecognition (and thus, not rate the MC) than Latinos represented by a white MC. Predictably, partisan affiliation with the Democratic party lowers the likelihood of nonrecognition of the MC. Other predictors of the pattern of missing data include respondents' education and age: less well educated and younger Latinos are more likely to claim nonrecognition of their MC. Additionally, MC time-in-office is negatively related to nonrecognition of the MC, suggesting the longer an incumbent holds office, the likelihood of MC recognition increases. Finally, as the district-level percent urban measure increases the probability of a respondent not recognizing their MC increases.

The results for the second-stage model lend marginal evidence that racial characteristics are associated with not rating the MC. For black MCs, the probit estimate of .48 has a two-tailed *p*-value of .08. For the white MCs, the probit estimate of .37 has a two-tailed *p*-value of .07. The coefficients suggest the probability of not rating the MC is higher if the MC is black or white compared to Latino. Unlike the models for black and white respondents, partisanship is not significantly related to "recognizing, but not rating" an MC. We again find that respondent education level is associated with the likelihood of rating the MC: higher educated respondents are more likely to rate the MC. Tenure in office is again negatively related to the likelihood of rating the MC.

Finally, we consider the model of Latino MC evaluations. The results indicate that Latinos evaluate Latino MCs more positively than black or white MCs, which demonstrates an ingroup preference among

Latino respondents. Latinos average evaluation of a white MC is about 7 points lower than the average rating of a Latino MC, while Latino evaluations of black MCs is 13 points lower than for a Latino MC. Like the results for white respondents, these results lend evidence of "ordering" in MC evaluations. Specifically, Latino respondents evaluate black MCs lower than white MCs. Indeed, Latino respondents on average evaluate a white MC almost 6 points higher than a black MC. This result is consistent with the theoretical model based on the "black-brown divide" given in [3]. Partisan affiliation is also associated with MC evaluations: Latinos who identify with the Democratic party offer higher MC evaluations than compared to Latinos who identify with the Republican party (or who claim to be independents). Finally, the estimated IMRs exhibit the pattern seen among both white and black respondents.

Utility of the Selection Bias Approach

In general, we find evidence that race and ethnicity is associated with patterns in MC recall and evaluations. When the MC possesses the essential attribute, respondents are less likely to "not recognize" or "recognize and not rate" the MC than when the race/ethnicity of the MC and respondent differ. This suggests the missing data we find for these evaluative items is missing for systematic reasons. Simply ignoring the pattern of missing data would have implications for models of candidate evaluation: nonevaluation is differentially related (in some instances) to racial/ethnic characteristics of the MC. Moreover, imputation methods like those used by Gay (2002) might also be problematic. There are two "paths" by which missing data might emerge. Problematically (from the perspective of imputation methods), the two modes yield *opposite* effects on evaluative judgment, evinced by the sign on the estimated selection hazards. To see the possible implications of ignoring the selection mechanism, consider Table 4.

Here we give the regression estimates for models not accounting for selection effects. A fairly clear result readily emerges: estimates for the covariates measuring race/ethnicity of the MC generally give coefficients with smaller standard errors. This is particularly true for minority respondents. The overall conclusions we make with respect to white respondents do not appreciably change; however, for black respondents, for whom no discernible "race" effect was found in evaluations, we do detect evidence of race-based judgment. The coefficient for the white MC indicator gives a two-tailed *p*-value of .03. For Latino respondents,

TABLE 4
Respondent Evaluations of Members of Congress

Variable	Coefficient
White Respondents	
Black MC	−7.70 (1.97)**
Latino MC	−3.84 (2.00)†
R's PID	7.54 (.62)**
Black MC × R's PID	4.93 (2.93)^C
MC's Ideo	−5.77 (2.06)**
R's Ideo	5.00 (.98)**
% Urban	−.11 (.03)**
Constant	72.64 (2.10)**
N Cases	6025
Black Respondents	
White MC	−4.98 (2.30)*
R's PID	8.96 (1.26)**
MC's Ideo	3.35 (4.62)
R's Ideo	.56 (1.72)
% Urban	−.02 (.04)
Constant	65.94 (4.27)**
N Cases	1306
Latino Respondents	
Black MC	−11.06 (3.10)**
White MC	−7.33 (1.86)**
R's PID	7.75 (2.00)
MC's Ideo	.50 (5.05)
R's Ideo	−2.74 (2.42)
% Urban	−.11 (.06)†
Constant	76.78 (4.35)**
N Cases	842

Note: All F-tests are significant at $p < .001$. Two-tailed *p*-values: **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$;
One-tail *p*-values: †$p < .05$; *C* represents a conditional standard error.

the standard errors as well as the size of the estimated coefficient differ from the models we report (though both are in the same direction). Further, the results indicate Latino evaluations of black and white MCs are not significantly different, a relationship that is revealed in the model accounting for selection bias. The substantive point we want to make is that the pattern of missing data—the inability or unwillingness to rate the MC—is largely tethered to racial/ethnic congruence (as well as the obvious factor of education). Failing to account for the two forms of selection bias will result in inaccurate conclusions regarding the impact of race/ethnicity on MC evaluations.

Discussion

These results move us beyond a binary account of dyadic descriptive representation and provide insight into the identity politics surrounding House incumbent evaluations. Our selection bias approach provides important insights here. When controlling for the propensity to recall an incumbent based on her race/ethnicity, two important findings emerged. First, while African Americans were more likely to recall an African American MC than a white MC, their evaluations of white and black MCs were comparable. Second, both white and Latino constituents have clear preferences among nondescriptive racial groups. On average, white Americans do evaluate white MCs most favorably but are significantly more favorable towards Latino MCs than black MCs. This pattern is symmetrical to a certain extent, with Latino constituents more favorably evaluating white MCs than black MCs. Furthermore, this estimated effect holds even after accounting for MC ideology. That is, since black and Latino MCs are associated with more liberal voting records, we speculated that ideological extremity of these legislators from white constituents might drive evaluations. It does not. Thus, controlling for the representative's ideology does not diminish the impact of MCs' race/ethnicity on white constituent evaluations. These results extend Gay's (2001, 2002) work by demonstrating that race is not just a factor driving white Americans' opinions of their MCs, it also plays an important role in Latino opinion.

Latino MC evaluations are consistent with the notion of a "black-brown divide"—that competition for political and economic resources among minority groups has contributed to intergroup animosities. Our findings conflict with the shared interests hypothesis. The mutual minority status and ideological proximity of black and Latinos do not seem to produce a common ground or sense of linked fate. Contrary to Dovi's (2002) conceptualization of "preferable descriptive representation," the evidence does not support the idea that minority groups (specifically Latinos) prefer nondescriptive minority representation over white representation. They suggest African American MCs are *not* the "next best choice" for Latinos. Unfortunately, we cannot draw conclusions about black constituents' attitudes towards Latino MCs, given the paucity of data available. As a result, it is unclear whether black constituents experience the same kind of animosity towards Latino leadership or whether the animosity is more one-sided, as work by Kaufmann (2003) might suggest.

The racial dimension of MC evaluations will take on increasing importance given the growing racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the

population and the constraints on descriptive representation imposed by single-member electoral districts. Race and ethnicity are important lenses through which representatives are judged. And while such labels have heuristic value, the information conveyed by MC race and ethnicity varies as a function of constituents' race, ethnicity, and partisan identification in meaningful ways. The story that emerges is more complex than a simple essentialist account of dyadic representation, yet it suggests that one cannot discount the role of race and ethnicity in public judgments of political leaders.

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NOTES

1. Rocha et al. (2010) use data up to 2006, but focus on collective and dyadic representation.

2. Poole and Rosenthal's (1996) NOMINATE score (first-dimension) is based on MCs' voting record over all congressional roll calls. It is scaled such that positive scores denote a more liberal record, negative scores a more conservative record. The scale ranges from -1 to 1.

3. The *t*-test for blacks versus Latinos is -11.01; for Whites versus Latinos is -9.86; for Whites versus Blacks is -35.24. All tests are significant at any conventional level.

4. The ANES Time Series Study, which is the source of public opinion data used in this study, was not conducted in 2006. As such, the analysis does not include data for 2006.

5. Unfortunately, few districts were sampled in the NES with a black or Latino Republican MC (19 and 12, respectively) to justify statistical inference. Further there are few black or Latino respondents in the data set that are represented by white Republican MCs (423 and 286, respectively). Given the sparseness of data and the desire for comparability across racial/ethnic groups, we restrict attention to only Democratic MCs.

6. The incumbent feeling thermometer has an overall mean value of 64.96 and an overall median value of 60. Among white respondents, the mean value on the

incumbent feeling thermometer is 62.49 with a median value of 60; among black respondents, the mean is 65.56 and the median is 70; and among Latinos, the mean is 64.55 and the median is 65.

7. Approximately, 11.6% of respondents did not rate their MC because they did not recognize their MC. And, 6.4% of respondents recognized, but did not rate their MC.

8. The IMR is given by $\frac{\phi}{\Phi}$, where ϕ is the probability density function and Φ is the cumulative probability function for the standard normal.

9. The inclusion of the IMR in the outcome model removes the part of the error term that is correlated with the independent variables and replaces it with an error term that is uncorrelated with the independent variables (Achen 1986). Removing this source of error eliminates the bias introduced by the selection process.

10. This approach allows us to separate the decision to evaluate an incumbent from the actual evaluation of an MC, which is key given that some of the factors that influence MC evaluations also influence whether or not a respondent offers an evaluation of their incumbent—due to either not recognizing the MC or recognizing but not rating their MC. The two selection stages estimate the factors that affect whether a respondent does not recognize their MC or recognizes but does not evaluate their MC. The outcome model estimates the factors associated with respondents' evaluation of their MC.

11. Figures illustrating the significance of the interaction terms have not been included due to space constraints, but they are available upon request. The estimates presented in the text are based on points along the range of the interaction that are significant.

12. In an effort to account for the distance between the ideology of the MC and the respondent, we estimated a model including an interaction between *MC's Ideo* and *R's Ideo*. The interaction was universally nonsignificant and therefore omitted from the models.

13. The 95% confidence intervals are respectively (.07, .11) and (.13, .38).

14. The 95% confidence interval are (.03, .05) and (.03, .14), respectively.

15. Estimates indicate there is a significant difference in white respondents' evaluation of black and white MCs across a majority of the partisanship indicators: −1 to .33. Thus, there is no difference in white evaluations of black and white MC among respondents who weakly and strongly identify with the Democratic party.

16. This reveals a modest difference in white independent respondents' evaluations of black and Latino MCs; however, this estimate is based on a very conservative scenario where MC ideology is set to the average of the MC ideology score across all racial/ethnic groups. Using the average ideology score for black MCs and the average ideology score for Latino MCs, white-independent respondents' rate Latino MCs 4.5 points higher than black MCs with a two-tailed *p*-value of .08.

17. This is because in the selection models a "1" is associated with selecting out.

18. Unlike the models for white respondents, neither the selection nor outcome models for black nor Latino respondents include any statistical interactions. Using the technique outlined by Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006), we determined that there are no statistically significant conditional relationships, suggesting the unconditional model holds.

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