

**Concepts and Correlates of Political Representation:**

**A Multicultural and Subnational View**

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## **Concepts and Correlates of Political Representation:**

### **A Multicultural and Subnational View**

The content and contours of political representation have been among the most heavily studied topics in U.S. scholarship on democratic leadership. However, nearly all of the recent research on political representation focuses on legislators' leadership actions, policy responsiveness to their constituents, and behavior consequences on constituency participation and trust. Very few scholars examine how elected officials themselves think of the role of their representation in the first place, and how this perception is linked to their own personal characteristics, social network, perception of and connection to the constituency, and the electoral structure. Even less attention has been paid to examining the representational roles of nonwhite elected officials.

This paper attempts to fill this void by investigating the contours and correlates of representational roles as perceived by elected officials of color serving at state and local levels nationwide. The research questions we seek to answer are: How do elected officials of color view their representational role? Do Black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian officials differ in their representational role orientations? What other factors may influence (or be associated with) their orientation toward a representational role? In what ways do elected officials who hold the trustee view differ from those who hold the delegate view? And, how do Blacks and Latinos differ in the correlates of these two prevailing views of representation? Our data, the Gender and Multicultural Leadership Survey, focus on individuals serving at state and local levels of government where nine out of ten of nonwhite elected officials are located. With the increasing diversity in the nation's population and political leadership, this research aims to broaden understanding of the meanings of democratic representation in a multicultural society by

studying the attitudes of female and male elected officials of African, Asian, Hispanic, and American Indian origin.

### **Concepts of and Research on Political Representation**

Despite a relatively high and steady flow of interest in the studying of political representation in the last half century, there is little agreement among generations of political scientists on its normative meanings, empirical dimensions, and the validity and reliability of measures. Hanna Pitkin (1967), in her influential book *The Concept of Representation*, identifies four dimensions of political representation—formalistic, descriptive, symbolic, and substantive. She criticizes the formalistic definitions of representation conceived as authorization or as accountability incomplete and unrealistic. Equally problematic to her are notions of representation that emphasize either the mirror-image function of the legislators (descriptive representation) or the shared values between legislators and their constituency (symbolic representation). To her, neither can capture the full meanings of representatives' role and the range of activities they are engaged in as representatives. Pitkin breaks new ground in the studying of political representation by arguing that representation should mean “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them” (p. 209). She goes on to say that “[t]he representative must act independently; his action must involve discretion and judgment; he must be the one who acts.... The representative must act in such a way that there is no conflict, or if it occurs an explanation is called for” (pp. 209-210).

The ideal notion of political representation as conceived by Pitkin is a substantive one, which strives to balance out the perceived preferences of the represented with the representatives' institutional role as advocates of constituency interest. Although Pitkin's

substantive notion of representation is well received, the paradoxical nature of the notion and the brevity of the discussion in her book have not proven too useful for later scholars to resolve the central problems of configuring the nature and scope of democratic political representation. A key area of the challenges centers on whether representatives should act as *delegates* or as *trustees*. Those representatives who subscribe to the delegate view of representation see themselves as acting on instructions from their constituency through the expressed preferences of the constituents. James Madison is the best-known advocate for the delegate view of representation. Those representatives who follow the trustee view see themselves as free agents acting on their own understanding of the best interest of the constituency and the principled directives of their own conscience. The trustee view of representation is best articulated by Edmund Burke. Representatives who do not subscribe strictly to either the delegate or the trustee view of representation are considered *politicos*, whose representational acts depend upon the particular circumstances of the decision-making process.

Historically marginalized groups based on their racial, ethnic, gender and other social attributes may create a special problem for Pitkin, whose theory treats representatives as an undifferentiated body of actors who are presumed to be male (and White). Many believe it is both undemocratic and unjust to see the prolonged political exclusion of nonwhite women and men and to neglect their indispensable and constitutive roles in the building of their own local and the national communities and in their bridging roles linking underprivileged sectors of the society (Collins 1990; Young 1990, 2000; Phillips 1995, 1998, 1999; Guinier and Torres 2002). Williams (1998), for instance, insists that, to ensure fair representation, politically marginalized groups must be able to elect their representatives to help articulate and defend minority interests. Nevertheless, questions have been raised about whether Blacks and other minority groups need

representatives who descriptively look like them to represent *adequately* the interests of the respective minorities. Mansbridge (1999) sees the improvement in the quality of deliberation as a benefit of this type of representatives because of their ability to help advance community interests. Dovi (2002) argues that not all descriptive representatives are preferable; only those who have strong mutual relationships with dispossessed subgroups of historically disadvantaged groups are preferable descriptive representatives. Nevertheless, through her research on the impacts of AIDS on the Black community, Cohen (1999) uncovers an inevitable tension in the representation of groups of women of color and between women and men of color. Research by Hawkesworth (2003) tells the story of marginalization of women of color in the U.S. Congress who experience both subtle and blatant forms of discrimination despite their formal office title and constitutional power. These studies suggest the need to consider the conditional and politicized nature of political representation that may occur in more than one way. Descriptive representation may be warranted only when representatives are able to perform certain functions in certain contexts and for certain groups (Dovi 2008).

An exciting wave of empirical research mostly done at the quantitative level has emerged in recent years on the political representation of racial/ethnic minorities and women in the United States. Its focus, however, has been on legislators' leadership actions, policy responsiveness to their constituents, and behavior consequences on constituency participation and trust (e.g., Geron and Lai 2001; Takeda 2001; Gay 2002; Swers 2002; Pantoja and Segura 2003; Banducci, Donovan, and Karp 2004; Baker and Cook 2005; Griffin and Keane 2006; Preuhs 2006; Whitby 2007; Rocca, Sanchez, and Uscinski 2008). A few examine nonwhite women's leadership style through qualitative research (e.g., Hardy-Fanta 1993; Prindeville and Gomez 1999; Garcia and Marquez 2001; Prindeville 2002). As the literature review in the next section shows, very few

recent scholars examine how elected officials themselves think of the role of their representation in the first place, and how this perception is linked to the electoral structure, their perception of and connection to the constituency, and their own personal characteristics and political socialization.

### **Past Studies on Representational Roles**

The body of past research on representational roles is vast. Jewell (1970, 1985) attributed the rise of this research interest to the publication of *The Legislative System* (Wahlke, Eulau, Buchanan, and Ferguson 1962). Through their exploratory study of four state legislatures (California, New Jersey, Ohio and Tennessee) in 1957, Wahlke and his co-authors find that there are differences in the way representatives view their roles and responsibilities. They use the concept of role as the organizing principle in studying legislative attitudes. They argue that a focus on role can help scholars understand the relationship between individual legislative behavior and legislative structure and function. They believe their approach is better suited to explain the interaction between individuals and institutions than do individualistic rational-actor or psycho-analytic models. Among the role sectors they identify is representational role, which may contain various role orientations (such as the trustee, the delegate, and the politico). Wahlke et al. find that a majority of the legislators (63%) in their study adopted the trustee role, 23% chose the politico role, and only 14% chose the delegate orientation. They demonstrate that a large body of legislators do identify themselves by specific role orientations and that some of the differences may be related to political party systems, gubernatorial influence, and the level of legislative professionalization. They posit that “it is likely that most legislators pattern their behavior in light of one role orientation in one situation, but according to another under other circumstances” (p. 17). However, they do not make a systematic attempt to explain how or why

legislators choose certain types of role orientations. Neither do they measure the behavioral consequences of these orientations.

Following Wahlke et al., a large number of scholars picked up the task of systematically analyzing the sources and consequences of legislative behavior (e.g., Hedlund and Friesema 1972; Jones 1973; Gross 1978; Alpert 1979; McCrone and Kuklinski 1979; Price 1985). These studies report a mixed picture of the percentage distribution of the representational role orientations, depending on the state legislature examined and measures used. Jewell (1970) reviewed their major findings in terms of personal psychological, social, and political background, political competitiveness, and district characteristics. Frustrated by methodological inconsistencies adopted by these studies in their operationalization of the role concept, Jewell concludes that “the evidence concerning possible sources of legislative roles is fragmentary and sometimes contradictory” (p. 483). Still, he reports a number of significant patterns. For instance, education is positively related to the trustee view of representation, which may also be related to at-large rather than single-member districts. Legislators elected from competitive districts and rural areas tend to favor the delegate style, while those with an ambition for a higher office are less likely to identify with this view. Legislators who have longer legislative tenure or have been active in party organizations or political campaigns are also more like to be trustees. Surprisingly, political partisanship, ideology, and occupation are not found to be significant sources of influence. In the hope of providing a more systematic understanding of the factors associated with the various role orientations, Jewell suggests the collection of large scale national data and the conduct of multivariate analysis.

Interest in the role theory dissipated after studies in the 1970s and early 1980s raise questions regarding the assumption of consistency of role orientations (for a review, see Price 1985). Moreover, researchers have produced little evidence that links role concepts to actual legislative behavior (Kuklinski and Elling 1977). Cavanaugh (1982) argues that the trustee-delegate-politico role typology fails to capture the complexity of the representational process. Price's (1985) three-panel study of California Assembly members produces a further damage by demonstrating a substantial and non-directional shift in role selection among the non-freshman legislators. In part because of the weak and inconsistent findings of the sources and consequences of legislative role behavior and partly due to the growing interest in institutionalism, studies using the role theory practically disappeared from core political science after the 1970s (Saalfeld and Müller 1997). Insisting that "the roles of politicians are much too important to be overlooked," Donald Searing (1991, p. 1240) tried to revive the concept of roles in studying legislative behavior by focusing on the motivational approach where political roles are conceived as resulting from the interplay between institutional frameworks and individual preferences. The result of this qualitative project on British members of the parliament is reported in Searing (1994), but his call to renew research on the role theory seems lost among scholars of American politics, in general.

The few exceptions are found among people who study women and minorities in elective offices. In a recent review of the political representation of women officeholders, Reingold (2008) reports that female state and local officials tend to believe that they are more responsive to constituents, more approachable, more trusted, and more committed to community relations than their male counterparts (p. 133). Most studies find female officeholders do spend more time than their male counterparts with their constituents, helping them solve problems. However,

some scholars do not find women in office to be more likely to adopt the delegate role than men in office (Diamond 1977; Githens 1977; Reingold 2000). In fact, Reingold (2008) suspects that few women or men in these studies would identify with the delegate role, “perhaps because it could easily be associated with passiveness, subservience, weak leadership, and indecisiveness—all gender stereotypes that haunt female politicians in particular” (p. 134). Still, it seems beyond doubt that women serving in Congress and in state legislatures feel a special obligation to represent the interests of women.

The diversity among elite women is an issue that receives little empirical attention, so much so that Reingold cautions that “the experiences of women of color and questions about *their* representation are too often ignored or marginalized, and what we think we know about ‘women’ in public office may be applicable only to the majority of White, non-Hispanic women” (p. 137, emphasis original). Nevertheless, few differences are found between Black and White female state legislators in their attitude towards assigning the top priority to women’s issues (Barrett 1997). Similarly, Bratton, Haynie, and Reingold (2006) find Black female state lawmakers to be equally responsive to the interests of both Blacks and women by sponsoring as many Black interest bills as do Black male state lawmakers and as many women’s interest measures as do nonblack women. Compared to Latino state legislators, Fraga and his co-authors (2005) find Latinas to share the same basic policy priorities, but the latter are found to be more likely to forge coalitions across racial and gender lines. In her study of congressional women, Carroll (2002) also does not find women of color to differ from White women in conceiving themselves as having surrogate responsibilities for women. Instead, she finds strong similarities among these elite women in their perceptions of their responsibilities to help women as a whole. Nonetheless, Carroll finds that some women of color express a particular responsibility to look

out for the interests of poor and working class women. And a few women of color express the idea that their responsibilities to represent women extend beyond the borders of the United States. Possibly due to data limitations, none of the above studies makes an effort to identify commonalities and differences among women (and men) of color in their perceptions of representational roles and responsibilities.

## **Data and Methods**

This research examines the concept of representational role orientations among female and male elected officials of four nonwhite racial/ethnic origins. Our data comes from the 2006-07 Gender and Multicultural Leadership (GMCL) survey, which is a systematic telephone survey of elected officials of color holding four levels of subnational offices across the 50 states of America (see Lien, Hardy-Fanta, Pinderhughes, and Sierra 2008 for more details of survey methodology). This multicultural and multi-office national survey offers a unique opportunity to revisit an old but intriguing question. Armed with a large-scale, scientifically constructed data with a racially and geographically diverse population, a more comprehensive set of measures, and improved statistical tools, we hope to provide a new benchmark and clearer picture of the contours and sources of representational role orientations and contribute to a better understanding of the empirical relationship between descriptive and substantive representation.

Among the total N of 1,354 survey respondents, 53 percent are Black, 37 percent are Latino, 7 percent are Asian, and 2 percent are American Indian/Alaskan Native (AIAN).<sup>1</sup> About half (47 percent) hold positions at the municipal level, 26 percent at the school board level, 16

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<sup>1</sup> Due to the lack of a national directory of American Indian elected officials, we rely on a national roster of state legislators prepared by the National Council of State Legislators to prepare our database of American Indians. Because of the predominance of American Indians serving at the state legislative level in our database, caution should be taken to analyze and interpret results regarding this population.

percent at the county level, and 11 percent hold positions at the state legislative level of governance. Just over one-third of all respondents are women (38%), with Black women reporting the highest percentage share at 43% within each racial group, followed by AIAN women at 41%, and 31% for both Latinas and Asian women. A larger share of both female and male respondents serve at the municipal level than at the school board level, which is higher than at other levels.

The key dependent variable is representational role orientation. It is obtained from a survey question asking respondents to choose from a pair of statements on the representational role *that comes closest to his or her own view even if neither one is exactly right*: A. *In a situation when the views of my constituents conflict with my own, it is more important that my vote reflects the views of my constituents.* B. *In a situation when the views of my constituents conflict with my own, it is more important that my vote reflects my informed judgment and trust that my constituents will support me.* To better reflect or approximate the pattern of respondents' role orientations, interviewers are instructed to select "neither/it depends" or "don't know/not sure" for respondents who did not select either one of the statements. Informed by the literature reviewed in previous sections, we treat respondents who chose statement A as "delegates," those who chose statement B as "trustees," and those indicated "neither/it depends" as "politicos." Those who did not express an opinion on this question are believed to be unclear of their representational role or uninformed of the concept.

Inspired by prior research, we hypothesize that an elected official's attitude on representational role may be associated with a complex set of factors involving the personal, social, institutional, and the constituency dimensions. Two sets of factors may be associated with the personal dimension. The personal sociodemographic background may include one's

race, gender, and highest level of education. The personal political orientation may include partisanship, ideology, political motivation, and political ambition. On the social dimension, we consider one's political socialization and social network through the level of prior involvement in a range of civic institutions, length in office, and length of community residence. On the institutional dimension, we consider one's current level of office (state legislative, county, municipal, and school board), type of election (single-member district, at-large, or multi-member district), type of competition (challenger, incumbent, and an open-seat), and campaign competitiveness (margin of victory). On the constituency dimension, we consider perceptions of constituency attitude (partisanship and ideological orientation) and the perceived racial- and class- makeup of jurisdictions. In addition, we include a measure of the frequency of constituency contacts as a surrogate indicator of respondent's familiarity with constituency opinion. (See Appendix for question wording and coding schemes.)

We report the bivariate results from cross-tabulation and one-way Analysis of Variance procedures in the next section, followed by multivariate results from logistic regression procedures. For the bivariate analysis, valid responses in the question on representational role are recoded into four categories 1=trustee, 2=delegate, 3=politico, and 4=don't know/not sure. In the multivariate analysis, we analyze the correlates of the trustee and the delegate view of representation by creating two separate dummy variables for each of the role orientations. Models of each representational role are reported in Tables 6 and 7 for all respondents as well as for Black and Latino respondents, respectively.

### **How Are Representational Roles Viewed: Bivariate Findings**

How do elected officials of color view their representational role? The top row of Table

1 shows that, of the 1293 valid responses to the question on representational role orientation, six in ten identify with the trustee view of representation, about one-third identify with the delegate view, only 35 or 3% choose the politico view, and 26 or 2% do not know or are not sure of their view on this question. This finding that not all elected officials of color view their representational role as delegate, but only a minority among them does, is instructive. It suggests that common sense understanding of nonwhite officials being prone to perform the mirror-image function of representatives by simply reflecting the preferences of their (nonwhite) constituents may be largely false. It may support Reingold's (2008) suspicion on the negative connotations of the delegate role. The other possible reason for this discrepancy is the far from perfect correlation between a nonwhite elected official's race and his/her perception of the majority racial make-up of his/her constituency. In the GMCL survey, only 40% of AIAN, 14% of Asian, 59% among Black, and 61% among Latino respondents view their constituency as made-up mostly by members of their own racial background. We report a similar pattern of findings when actual county-level data from the Census and the entire population of nonwhite elected officials are used (Lien, Pinderhughes, Sierra, Hardy-Fanta 2007). Nevertheless, our survey data also shows a close relationship between the reported majority race of the constituency and the self-identified race of the elected officials. To wit, 91% of respondents who report having a constituency that is mostly American Indian are AIANs; 81% of respondents who report having a constituency that is mostly Asian are Asians; 99% of respondents who report having a constituency that is mostly Black are Blacks; and 93% of respondents who report having a constituency that is mostly Latino are Latinos. Does perceived racial make-up influence the representational role orientation of nonwhite elected officials? We explore this and other possible explanations for our respondents' choice of a representational role in the rest of the

paper. Although respondents who do not identify with either the trustee or the delegate role are small in number, the size may reflect a bias in question wording that does not provide palpable alternatives to the delegate and trustee role orientations. To better inform the contours and correlates of representational role orientations, we keep the “politico” and “DK/NS” categories in the bivariate analysis and comment on how they differ from the two major role orientations at the end of the section.

Do personal sociodemographic characteristics such as race, gender, and education matter in nonwhite elected officials’ representational role orientations? Entries in bold type of Table 1 show that race matters. Although respondents in each race all identify most with the trustee role, Asians register a particularly high percentage, while both Blacks and Latinos register comparable and lower percentages. Blacks and Latinos share the same percentage of identification with the delegate role (35%), which is significantly higher than the other nonwhite groups. AIANs report the lowest identification with the delegate role, but the highest with the politico role and the “DK/NS” categories. AIANs are the only group where gender matters. In particular, 100% of male, but only 29% of female, identify with the trustee role, while an equal percentage of AIAN women also choose the delegate or the “DK/NS” category. Male and female elected officials of color in other groups share a very similar pattern of their representational role orientation. Female elected officials of color as a group also do not differ from their male counterparts in their concept of representational role. The last three rows in Table 1 shows that, regardless of one’s level of educational achievement measured in terms of having no college, some college, or having a college degree or more, each level has a nearly identical relationship to one’s representational role orientation.

Indicators of personal political orientations vary in terms of their relationships to representational role orientation. Table 2 shows that Republicans register the highest percentage of identification with the trustee role and the lowest percentage with the delegate role. Democrats and Independents are virtually the same in their role orientations, whereas those who do not identify with a major party or a third party have the lowest identification with the trustee role and the highest incidence of falling into the “DK/NS” category. Political ideology in general does not seem to significantly impact how one views representational role. However, those who are very liberal have a significantly higher frequency to identify with the trustee role than those who are very or somewhat conservative. Our respondents’ motivation to run for the first public office can be categorized into the following number of reasons--community-based, issue-based, personal interest, strategic concerns, a desire to represent or conduct public service, or being recruited or encouraged to run. Somewhat surprisingly, none of the motivations has a significant relationship with an elected official’s representational role orientation at the bivariate level. Similarly, a comparison of the mean scores using one-way ANOVA reveals very little relationship between the degree of political ambition as measured by the likelihood of running for a higher office and one’s view on representational role. However, those who are uncertain of their role orientation also have the lowest average ambition score.

We gauge an elected official’s political socialization and ties to social network through a 9-item index of prior involvement in civic institutions. Table 3 shows that, on average, respondents who hold the delegate concept of representation report a higher level of organizational involvement than those who hold other role concepts. This pattern is true with most types of civic engagement except faith-based organizations and election campaigns where those who hold the politico role orientation report the highest scores. Those who have no certain

idea of their representational role orientation report the lowest overall level of involvement except in the instances of participation in civil rights and women's organizations. We do not find a significant relationship between years serving in public office or years residing in the community of representation and representational role orientation. However, those who hold the politico view appear to have the longest professional and residential ties.

The relationship between representational role and political institutional context among elected officials of color is examined in four ways (Table 4). First, in terms of the level of office held, we do not observe an apparent pattern of relationship other than that local school board members report a higher frequency of identification with the trustee role and a lower frequency of identification with the delegate role than those in other levels of office. Second, in terms of the type of election, we see that those who are elected from at-large system report a significantly higher frequency of identification with the trustee role and lower frequency with the delegate role. Third, in terms of the type of electoral campaign, there seems to be a tendency for incumbents to identify with the trustee role and for challengers to identify with the delegate role. Fourth, in terms of campaign competitiveness as measured by the margin of victory in the most recent general election, we do not see a distinguishable pattern of relationships worthy of reporting.

The relationship between representational role orientation and perceptions of constituency is assessed from five perspectives. Table 5 shows that elected officials who consider their constituency as mostly Republican tend to report a higher frequency of identification with the trustee role and a lower frequency of identification with the delegate role. The relationship to perceived constituent political ideology is weak. Still, those who consider

their constituency to be mostly liberal report a higher frequency of identification with the delegate role than those who consider their constituency to be mostly conservative. Perception of the dominant racial group in the jurisdiction may matter in that those who view their jurisdiction as mostly-Asian and mostly-AIAN report higher frequencies of identification with the trustee role, while those who see their jurisdiction as mostly Black, Latino, or evenly mixed report higher frequencies of identification with the delegate role. The concept of delegate role is especially low among respondents who see their constituency as mostly AIAN. Perception of the dominant class status of their jurisdictions may also matter in that those who perceive their jurisdiction as middle or upper classes have higher frequencies of identification with the trustee role, while those who believe their jurisdictions are mostly poor or working class have higher frequencies of identification with the delegate role. There is no statistically distinguishable difference between delegates and trustees in their degree of familiarity with constituency opinion as indicated by the frequency of constituency contacts. However, the politicians report a much higher frequency of contacts, while those who have no clear concept of representational role also report few constituency contacts.

Our finding on the popularity of the trustee view of representation among our sample of nonwhite elected officials is consistent with recent studies on US women reviewed in Reingold (2008) as well as the early study by Wahlke et al. (1962). The lack of substantial differences based on educational attainment among the respondents at the bivariate level appear to contradict with one of the most consistent findings in prior research summarized in Jewell (1970, 1985) where more education is associated with a trustee orientation. The lack of gender-based differences among Blacks supports findings made by Bratton, Haynie, and Reingold (2006). AIANs' distinctive pattern of representational role orientation may reflect the unique group

history and social and political structure of the community.<sup>2</sup> This finding cautions scholars against unscrupulous lumping together of AIANs with other elected officials of color. The finding on Asians' having a higher identification with the trustee role than Latinos may also reflect the substantial differences in constituency structure, among other factors. It seems to lend support to Lai and Geron's (2001) findings from two nationwide mail surveys of Latino and Asian American elected officials in 1999 and 2000 in which a significant number of Latinos aim their policies to primarily benefit the Latino community whereas Asians tend to focus on issues broader than ethnic-specific concerns. Although our finding concerning electoral competitiveness is mixed, the observed stronger relationship between at-large elections and the trustee role seems to be consistent with past research.

At the bivariate level, we find that those who identify with the trustee role tend to be Asian or American Indian--both in their own racial background and the perceived racial background of the majority of their constituency. They also tend to be Republican in self partisan identification and the perceived dominant partisanship of the constituency, more liberal in personal ideology and the perceived dominant political outlook of the constituency, holding school board level of office, elected from at-large systems, and perceive their constituency as mostly of middle or upper classes. Conversely, those who identify with the delegate role tend to be Black or Latino--both in their own and perceived majority racial background of their constituency—and perceive their constituency to be mostly poor or working class. Those who

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<sup>2</sup> AIANs' disproportionate concentration in the state legislative office may be an additional reason for the divergence. However, analysis restricted to state legislative office shows a similar pattern of race and gender effect to that found in the larger population.

report higher levels of prior civic engagement or ran their most recent campaign as challengers also have a higher tendency to identify with the delegate role.

Last but not least, we note that the major differences between respondents who fall into the “politico” and “DK/NS” categories and those who identify with the trustee or delegate role orientations seem to lie in the strength of political socialization network, personal political orientation, and the extent of constituency contacts. Those who are politicos or have no certain idea of their representational role orientation report the lowest overall level of prior civic involvement. Those who are politicos appear to have the longest professional and residential ties and a much higher frequency of constituency contacts. Those who do not have an idea of their representational role, on the other hand, also do not identify with a partisan label and they register the lowest mean ambition score.

#### Correlates of Trustee and Delegate Roles: Multivariate Findings

Will relationships observed at the bivariate level hold after controlling for possible confounding factors at the multivariate level? We estimate correlates of the trustee and the delegate role orientations using the logistic regression procedure, which is designed to handle the situation when the dependent variable is a dichotomous one. Table 6 shows that, among elected officials of color as a whole, one’s racial identity and gender are not useful predictors of one’s trustee orientation when other conditions are equal. Instead, the higher one’s level of educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of one’s adopting a trustee orientation. This is true for the case of political ideology as well, where the trustee orientation is positively and significantly associated with the higher level of identification with the liberal position. In nine out of ten times, one’s likelihood of adopting a trustee role may be positively association with a stronger

level of identification with the Republican Party, but it may be negatively associated with the community-based motivation when one first ran for a public office. One's adoption of the trustee orientation does not seem to be affected by the level of prior involvement in civic organizations or groups nor the length of time in public office. It also does not have a significant relationship to the level of office-holding or the type of political competition in the most recent general election. However, type of election does matter in that respondents elected from at-large elections are more likely to adopt the trustee concept of representation. Perceptions of constituency structure matters in that those respondents who perceive their constituency as consisting mostly of the middle-class are more likely to adopt the trustee role. However, everything else being equal, neither the perceived majority partisan orientation nor perceived majority racial make-up of the constituency is useful to predict a nonwhite elected official's representational role orientation towards trustees.

Among Black elected officials, only two variables reach some level of statistical significance: education and at-large election. The higher the educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of a Black elected official to adopt the trustee concept of representation. In nine of ten times, a Black official elected from an at-large system is also more likely to adopt the trustee concept. None of the indicators of one's personal political orientation, socialization and social network, and perceived constituency structure seem to be associated with the likelihood of adopting the trustee role orientation among Blacks. A very different pattern emerges when we turn to analyze Latino elite behavior in the same survey. It is their political partisanship and ideology, level of office, type of competition, and perception of the class make-up of the constituency that may predict their adoption of the trustee role orientation. Specifically, a Latino elected official may be more likely to adopt the trustee role orientation if he or she has a higher

degree of Republican partisanship or a stronger level of political liberalism, is elected from an at-large system, perceives oneself as representing a constituency that is mostly middle-class, and did not run as a challenger in the last campaign. Neither gender or education or indicators of socialization and social network is found to be significantly associated with the concepts of representation among Latinos.

Table 7 reports the possible correlates of a nonwhite elected official's representational role orientation towards delegates. In the model for all respondents, we again see the positive influence of educational attainment on one's concept of representational role. Everything else being equal, in nine out of ten chances, being better educated is associated with a higher likelihood of adopting the delegate role orientation. Personal political characteristics are also significant sources of influence. However, opposite to the findings in Table 6, it is those respondents who are Democrats or ideologically conservative or having a community-based motivation that may be more likely to adopt the delegate role orientation. Also, different from predicting the trustee orientation, having a deeper level of engagement with a variety of civic organizations may help facilitate one's chance of adopting a delegate role orientation, whereas being elected from an at-large system may have the opposite effect. As is the case with predicting the trustee orientation for all respondents, neither one's level of office nor type of electoral campaign or perceived partisanship orientation in the constituency matters significantly in predicting the delegate role orientation, other conditions being equal. However, those respondents who perceive their constituency as consisting mostly of the working-class are more likely to identify with the delegate role. In at least nine of ten times, those elected officials of color who perceive their jurisdictions as racially mixed are also more likely to adopt the delegate role orientation.

Focusing on Black elected officials in the survey, we find a similar relationship of personal sociodemographic background, political partisanship, and prior civic engagement to the delegate role orientation as found among all respondents. Specifically, those who have a higher educational attainment, are Democratic in partisanship, or have a greater degree of involvement with social groups and civic organizations prior to one's running for an office are also more likely to adopt the delegate concept of representation. Neither any of the indicators of political institutional context nor the perceived constituency structure may predict the adoption of the delegate role among Blacks. Turning to the Latino model, we again see a very different pattern of influence or association. The likelihood for a Latino elected official to adopt the delegate concept of representation is not significantly associated with his or her personal sociodemographic background, political orientation, or socialization and social network. Rather, it is strongly and positively associated with perceptions of constituencies that are mostly working-class or poor, but negatively associated with those who hold elective positions on school boards. Thus, those Latino elected officials who adopt the delegate concept of representation may consider their representational role to be advocating for the disadvantaged classes. This is in sharp contrast to the previous table where Latinos who represent mostly middle-class constituents are found to be more likely to adopt the trustee concept of representation.

The above findings suggest the existence of both important differences and similarities between the bivariate and multivariate findings. Among all respondents, race matters at the bivariate level but not at the multivariate level. A similar case can be said of the perceived constituency racial make-up where a Black or Latino elected official representing a constituency that is perceived to be majority-Black or majority-Latino may be more likely to associate

themselves with the delegate role at the bivariate level, but the relationship disappears at the multivariate level. The reverse is true with education and community-based motivation. Everything else being equal, an elected official's race, gender, and years in public office prove to be consistently insignificant in predicting his or her representational role orientation, while level of education and aspects of personal political orientation may be more useful in understanding nonwhite elected officials' views on political representation. Same as at the bivariate level, personal political partisanship and ideology may impact representational role orientation. Election type (for at-large system only) and perception of constituent class also maintain their significance even after controlling for possible confounding factors. However, neither indicators of electoral competition nor constituent partisanship seems to be able to exert much influence after considering other differences among respondents.

Our separate analysis of Black and Latino elected officials reported in Tables 6 and 7 yields a significantly different pattern of correlates in representational role orientation from that observed among all respondents and between the two nonwhite groups. Thus, for predicting the trustee role, we see that education and at large-election are only useful for predicting Black elite behavior, while Latino elite behavior is more influenced by personal partisanship and ideology, level of office, type of competition, and class make-up. These group-specific findings help us understand the driving forces behind the performance of some of the variables when all respondents are lumped together as elected officials of color. This exercise helps unpack the meanings of being nonwhite of various colors in representing the increasingly multicultural American electorate.

## Conclusion

This research seeks to answer how do elected officials view their representational role and why. Although we seem to have ventured into an old and beaten path that produced mixed and ambiguous findings, we believe our research looking at the attitudes and opinions of a new generation of US elected officials who are nonwhite and of various racial, gender, and office-holding background has produced fresh and fruitful findings. First, we help demystify the one-dimensional concept of political representation that is often associated with minority elected officials and viewed with suspect. Second, we help specify the distinctions between the two prevailing views of democratic representation as well as the differences between identifiers and non-identifiers with these views. Third, we help unpack the experiences of minority elected officials as a whole by identifying what separates and binds the experiences of Black and Latino elected officials in their concepts of political representation. By considering a more diverse set of correlates of representational views spanning from an elected official's own personal sociodemographic background, political orientations, and social network to the political institutional context and perceptions of constituency structure, we hope to provide a more clear-cut understanding of their relationships to representational views held by minority elected officials. Together, we hope to have advanced research on legislative and other political elite behavior in an increasingly diverse political landscape in the United States. Our future research aims to provide a better understanding of the linkage between descriptive and substantive representation from the lens of representational views.

## Appendix: Selected Question Wording and Coding Schemes

Political Partisanship. Q79. *Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as Republican, Democrat, Independent, or of another political affiliation? (0=none, do not think in these terms, 1= strong Democrat, 2=Democrat, 3=leaning Democrat, 4=leaning Republican, 5= Republican, 6=Strong Republican)*

Political Ideology. Q 82. *How would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics? Do you generally think of yourself as very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative? (1= very conservative, 2= somewhat conservative, 3= middle of the road, 4= somewhat liberal, 5= very liberal)*

Initial Political Motivation. Q33. *Elected officials have a variety of reasons for why they first decided to run for a political office. We are interested in the most important factor that influenced your decision to run for public office the very first time. Briefly, what was the most important reason influencing your decision to run for public office the very first time?*

To address an issue: Have a passion or interest regarding a particular issue and/or problem.

To serve the community. Focus is on the community, not on an issue, what they can do, comments about representation, etc. They want to improve the community, give back to the community, etc. In general, responses that mentioned community were coded here.

To provide better representation. Includes anyone who is dissatisfied with current representation, wants to increase the number of minorities in the political office, or finds a need for more/better representation for a particular group of people.

To make a difference/promote change. References to wanting to influence change or to make a difference externally, as in the community, in government, or in the city.

Strategic Considerations. Run when prospect is most favorable to winning (i.e. qualified, could win, no one else ran) Demonstrates “response outcome expectations” by running for office. Includes political efficacy, meaning that they believe that they are competent or qualified to participate.

Personal ambition or interest. A reference to self and/or family. Includes mentions of emotion or personality trait as driving force, including political ambition.

Being encouraged/recruited/appointed. Includes anyone who was appointed to the position or encouraged by anybody to run.

Own political interest. Show interest in politics. Interested in being a part of politics, a part of the decision-making process.

Political Ambition. Q34. *Using a scale from zero to ten, where zero means not at all likely and ten means extremely likely, how likely is it that you will run for a higher level of office when you leave your current position?*

Prior Civic Engagement. Qs20-28. *On a scale from zero to ten, where zero means not at all involved and ten means extremely involved, how involved were you in activities with each of the following groups before you first ran for elected office? (Response list includes: political parties, labor unions, business groups, parent teacher's organizations or associations, election campaigns, civil rights organizations, faith-based organizations, community or neighborhood organizations, women's organizations)*

Years of Residence. Q18. *How long had you lived in the district or area you represent before you were elected to your present office?*

Type of Election. Q37. *Are you currently in a district, at-large, or multi-member district seat?*

Type of Competition. Q35. *In your most recent election for your current office, did you run as an: (1= incumbent, 2= challenger, 3= open seat)*

Constituency Partisanship. Q83. *Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about your constituents or the people who live in the jurisdiction or district that you represent.*

*Would you say that more voters in your jurisdiction identify with the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, or are the voters divided about equally between the two parties? (1=Republican, 2= Divided about equally, 3=Democratic, 4= Independent/third party)*

Constituent Ideology. Q84. *On most political issues, would you characterize the majority of voters in your jurisdiction as: (1=very liberal, 2=somewhat liberal, 3= middle of the road, 4=somewhat conservative, 5= very conservative)*

Constituent Class Make-up. Q85. *Would you say that your constituency is mostly:(1=poor, 2=working class, 3=middle-class, 4= upper middle class, 5= upper class, 6= mixed)*

Constituent Racial Make-up. Q86. *Would you say that the racial or ethnic makeup of your jurisdiction is mostly: (1=white, non-Hispanic, 2= Black, 3= Hispanic or Latino, 4= Asian, 5= American Indian, 6= Other, 7= Mixed)*

Constituent Contact. Q. 88. *To better understand the extent of constituent interactions with elected officials, how many constituents contact your office in an average week?*

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