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REPRESENTATION: PREFERENCES, PRIORITIES, AND
TRADEOFFS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates whether citizens are willing to make tradeoffs between descriptive and substantive representation. Answering this question is critical to efforts to maximize satisfaction with government for both minorities and members of the majority. This study makes four main contributions. First, it investigates how citizens, not scholars, evaluate descriptive and substantive representation. Although the stockpile of studies on the two types of representation has grown dramatically, the citizen's perspective has been noticeably absent. Second, in using an experiment, the study estimates not only the independent effects of the two aspects of representation, but also the interactive effects, which in turn speaks to how willing citizens are to make tradeoffs. Third, the study facilitates deriving implications for maximizing satisfaction with governmental decisions across majority and minority groups. Finally, the study investigates the role of innumeracy in shaping people's preferences for representation. I find that maximizing satisfaction for both minorities and the majority is indeed possible. Proportional or higher descriptive representation compensates for unfavorable substantive representation for minorities, and members of the majority are willing to accept such representational arrangements.

For Jillian

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Representation has consequences. In Oakland in 1966, there was a marked lack of diversity on the city's police force. Though the city was over 20% black, the police department only had 16 black officers out of over 600 total officers. At the same time, there were high levels of distrust of the government – and the police force in particular – in Oakland's black community. Each of these facts could be seen as troubling in its own right. But taken together, they formed an explosive situation.

Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in 1966, ostensibly as an effort to protect the black community against mistreatment by the Oakland police department. Members of the Black Panther Party patrolled streets in predominantly black neighborhoods openly carrying loaded shotguns. This tinderbox situation led to many violent encounters with law enforcement, and marked a dark time during the broader societal gains of the Civil Rights Movement.

In Oakland in 1966, issues of diversity, representation, and trust were inexorably linked. The police force was not representative of the community it served; only 2% of the police force shared the identity of the substantial black community they were policing. Whether the presence of more black officers would have ameliorated the distrust of police and government officials in the black community can never be known. But, taken together, a lack of trust and low levels of diversity among public servants led to a dangerous

combination.

This is obviously an extreme example, but it is not an isolated one. The Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (a.k.a, the Kerner Report) (1968) cited a lack of representation as a fundamental cause of the race riots of the early 1960's. This was a time in which blacks were largely excluded from the political process, both as voters and as elected officials, and achieved little penetration into the ranks of civil service. The violent clashes that broke out in many cities across the country are indicative of the damage that can be done by such a lack of representation and resulting distrust of and dissatisfaction with government.

In the decades since the Kerner Report, numerous academic studies have verified the link between citizens' perception of the fairness of government and respect for the rule of law. Tom Tyler's work on procedural justice has found that when decisions are judged as being made fairly, they are much more likely to be obeyed, even without a compliance mechanism (Tyler and Degoe, 1995). Tyler and coauthors have found similar links between perceived fairness and respect for and cooperation with the police (Tyler and Wakslak, 2004; Tyler and Fagan, 2006), and others have found linkages between the perceived legitimacy of government and anti-system behaviors (cf. Muller, Jukam and Seligson, 1982; Booth and Seligson, 2005). These specific consequences of fairness are part of broader linkages between representation, fairness perceptions, legitimacy, and the rule of law (Tyler, 2003; Tankebe, 2009; Hough et al., 2010).

In short, representation matters. The link between representation and trust in government can be consequential, for behaviors and for attitudes, and this dissertation further examines this link. I examine how two aspects of representation — descriptive and substantive — affect perceptions of the

fairness of decision-making. I do so with a primary concern of comparing how members of minority groups and the majority differ in their preferences for different aspects of representation. I argue that understanding both minority and majority group members' representation preferences and priorities is crucial, especially if we seek to design institutions that generate legitimate policy outcomes and maximize satisfaction across societal groups.

1.1 Representation

In her seminal work, Pitkin (1972) lays out four concepts of representation including two of immediate importance here: descriptive, and substantive. Descriptive representation occurs when officials “look like” those they represent. To be more specific, descriptive representation requires that elected officials come from the same social or identity group as their constituents. We then would observe descriptive representation whenever a black constituent is represented by a black member of Congress, a female constituent by a female mayor, etc.

Substantive representation is concerned with the extent to which elected officials behave in accordance with constituents' policy preferences. Rather than being focused on the composition of representative institutions, substantive representation is focused on the output of these institutions. One way to conceptualize substantive representation is through the policy congruence between constituents and their representatives (Miller and Stokes, 1963; Kuklinski and Elling, 1977). When elected officials share their constituents' policy preferences (and act on those policy preferences), then we can say that citizens are substantively represented.

Scholarship on representation is nothing new, but representation is a two-

sided relationship between representatives and constituents. Scholarly work on the citizen side of the representation link has been underdeveloped. Scholarly inquiries on representation have focused primarily on concerns about democratic ideals. How should representatives behave in order to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to constituents? Should they act as delegates or trustees? And how shall we balance majoritarian principles against the imperative of protecting minorities?

Noticeably absent from the questions above are any references to citizens' preferences. In other words, we ask "How should representatives act," not "How do citizens want their representatives to act." These are different questions. The former, by focusing on "should" is necessarily informed by democratic theory – how government ought to work. The latter, by focusing on citizens' wishes, is informed instead by the empirical reality of public attitudes toward government.

Both questions are important to address, but in this project I focus on the latter. Starting with theories of procedural justice and process preferences, I develop the notion of representation preferences. I argue that citizens hold preferences for different aspects of representation, and that they can prioritize one aspect over another. I use the idea of representation preferences to see how citizens respond to and evaluate descriptive and substantive representation.

1.2 Advancing the study of representation

One of the fundamental challenges of governance in the U.S. is the existence of groups that constitute a permanent minority of the population. As such, they will almost never make up a majority of governing institutions, and so

the assurance that they will be represented is tenuous at best. In the past 50 years, the U.S. Government has worked to try to improve the representation of these minority groups — particularly blacks and Latinos — through the creation of majority-minority districts at the Federal level. This does not come without some cost, since maximizing the number of blacks and Latinos elected to the U.S. House may also decrease the total number of liberal House members. As a result, there are fewer like-minded representatives in Congress as a whole to represent blacks and Latinos which could in turn lead to substantively worse policy outcomes for those groups.

The logic here is that in order to create districts that are majority-minority, you must take minorities who were previously spread across several districts and pack them into a single majority-minority district. Those districts that used to contain substantial minority populations will be left with redistricted populations that are more white and more conservative. Because of these political realities, members of permanent minority groups must make tradeoffs between aspects of representation. And understanding how members of these groups make tradeoffs is crucial to maximizing their satisfaction with democratic decision-making.

How then should we structure institutions in light of the need to make tradeoffs between the diversity of elected officials and the policy outcomes of government, especially with regard to permanent minority groups? The best approach, I argue, is to ask citizens to evaluate this tradeoff. If our interest is in maximizing satisfaction with government across groups in society (and I argue that it should be), then we need to know how important different aspects of representation are to different groups in society. It might be the case that some groups greatly prefer having elected officials who share their identity and background; other groups might prefer having a legislature that is as

close as possible to their ideal position on the issues; still others might care most about having elected officials who focus more on constituent service and care less about actual policy positions. Until we know more about citizens' priorities in the domain of representation, we do not know how to structure representative institutions to maximize satisfaction with government.

Directly studying the effects of representation and citizens' preferences about representation is no easy feat. More often than not, we cannot readily identify when two or more types of representation are at odds. For example, we might ask which is more important: having a representative who shares your identity and background, or having a representative who votes in line with your policy preferences. We could design a study where we compare citizens' attitudes when their representatives "look like" them, and when their representatives "vote like" them. But a problem is immediately obvious – what if representatives who share your identity also share your policy preferences? To the extent that these two forms of representation (identity and policy) overlap, we will be unable to identify which, if either, is more important. Since it would be difficult to observe each of these conditions independently in the real world, I investigate these different situations using experiments. Experiments allow me to manipulate each aspect of representation independently. This facilitates studying both the independent and joint/interactive effects of two (or more) aspects of representation.

For this project, I will be focusing on two aspects of representation: descriptive and substantive representation. I will also be looking across members of two groups in society: whites and blacks. Doing so will allow me to investigate how members of each group make tradeoffs about the two aspects of representation.

1.3 Divergence from the existing literature

As I have suggested, I diverge from the existing literature on representation in a few ways. First, I examine how citizens, not elites or scholars, evaluate representation. Second, I look at two aspects of representation independently and jointly. Third, I focus on maximizing satisfaction across groups in society rather than focusing on a single group. Finally, I explore what might shape peoples' preferences about representation including the role of context and personal ideology.

On the first point, I investigate representation looking from the bottom up. I ask what citizens' preferences and priorities are for different aspects of representation. This is very different from much of the literature, which focuses on aspects of representation as an end in and of themselves, or for their instrumental value. On the former point, many studies have investigated ways to boost one form of representation or another, with little discussion of whether that is what citizens actually want. Much of the literature on majority-minority districts, for example, hinges on a debate about whether creating such districts damages substantive representation in favor of descriptive representation. Rare is a discussion of whether minorities would be willing to make such a sacrifice.

A great number of studies have investigated whether one aspect of representation or another has effects on citizens' attitudes and behaviors. In particular, there is a growing literature on the effects of descriptive representation on citizens' behaviors. The literature investigates whether descriptive representation leads to greater contact with representatives, increased knowledge, or higher voter turnout. These are all important behaviors. But by focusing on them, we are studying representation only for what it does. These

outcomes might be congruent with or orthogonal to what citizens actually desire. We should be cautious of making broad suggestions about whether a given form of representation is beneficial without taking into account what citizens actually want. For example, we might see it as theoretically desirable to increase the number of access points citizens have on political decision-making processes. But it is dubious whether this is actually in line with what citizens prefer (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002). By focusing on these instrumental goals, we lose sight of the citizen portion of the citizen-representation link. I argue that we should refocus our attention on what citizens actually want, rather than what drives changes in citizen behavior.

In addition to focusing on the citizen, I also investigate two aspects of representation independently and together. A common problem that has already been stated above is that different aspects of representation often go together. I address this by using an experiment in which I manipulate each aspect of representation independently. Such approaches are relatively rare in the literature on representation.

Third, I focus on maximizing satisfaction via representation across multiple groups in society. The preponderance of literature on representation is focused on one group only. Usually the group is a minority group, and the question is whether some aspect of representation has beneficial consequences for that group. But some studies have pointed out that augmenting one group's representation may have negative consequences for other groups in society (Gay, 2001; Ulbig, 2005). As a result, looking at any one group in isolation might miss the bigger picture. We might be increasing the satisfaction of a minority group while simultaneously decreasing the satisfaction of the majority.

To address this, I investigate the reactions of both whites and blacks to

higher levels of black representation. I look at whether blacks and whites respond differently to increases in black descriptive and substantive representation. In so doing, I am able to speak to how increasing representation for one group might (or might not) negatively affect the satisfaction of another group. This sort of analysis is critical if we wish to make broad suggestions about how to structure democratic representation in societies where groups may have very different interests.

Finally, I explore what might shape peoples' preferences for and priorities between aspects of representation. I first investigate the role of context on representation preferences. By context, I refer to the demographic composition of a person's community. A person who lives in a predominantly black community may have vastly different preferences for black descriptive and substantive representation than one who lives in a predominantly white community.

To this end, I incorporate both citizen's actual community composition (as measured by Census information on their city) as well as their perceived community composition (as measured by their own estimate of the size of different groups in their community). Using these two measures of context, I ask whether attitudes towards representation are shaped by the relative sizes of groups in the community in which people live.

In addition, personal ideology might shape preferences for representation. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) find that ideology shapes general preferences about political processes, and it would be reasonable to expect the same to be true for specific preferences about representation. For this reason, I will explore if ideology acts as a moderator of levels of substantive and descriptive representation.

1.4 Plan for the dissertation

The dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 lays out the theoretical framework for the project. I discuss the important challenges posed by permanent minority groups, overview the extant literature on the effects of representation, and develop the notion of representation preferences. I then lay out expectations for both members of the majority and minority groups with regards to different aspects of representation.

Chapter 3 presents experimental evidence that the composition and policy decisions of local decision-making bodies can affect citizens' perceptions of fairness of the process and satisfaction with the composition of the decision-making body. I describe an experiment that manipulates both the composition of a decision-making body and its ultimate policy output. I investigate the direct effect of composition by looking across levels of descriptive representation for a minority group and the majority. I then investigate the direct effects of substantive representation by looking at whether the outcome of the decision-making process favors the majority or a minority group. I find that both substantive and descriptive representation have important effects on citizens' perceptions of fairness and satisfaction.

The following chapter expands upon the experimental results by looking at the interactions between the two aspects of representation. By investigating interactions, I am able to determine whether and how citizens make tradeoffs between the two aspects of representation. Chapter 4 finds that citizens, particularly members of permanent minority groups, are willing to make tradeoffs between different aspects of representation. I find that high levels of descriptive representation can compensate for unfavorable policy outcomes among members of a minority group. I also address the question of how

members of the majority react to higher levels of minority representation and find that evaluations of fairness and satisfaction do not degrade when minority representation is high.

I complicate the effects of representation in Chapter 5. In this chapter, I introduce the complication of racial context and ideology. Context poses two important challenges to the analyses in Chapters 3 and 4. First is that experimental subjects reside in widely varying residential contexts. As a result, 15% descriptive representation of blacks does not mean the same thing for subjects living in predominantly white versus diverse communities. Second, citizens' perceptions of racial context should also matter. It is not only the objective diversity of a community that should affect evaluations of representation — how people perceive their communities should matter too. I investigate these complications by conditioning experimental treatments on actual and perceived community context. This chapter also explores the role played by ideology in shaping representation preferences. Although this work is exploratory, it does raise interesting questions about how people form and maintain their preferences regarding representation.

The final chapter concludes.

CHAPTER 2

PERMANENT MINORITY GROUPS, REPRESENTATION, AND MAXIMIZING SATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT

The existence of permanent minority groups¹ in democratic societies poses at least two challenges for representation. First, members of the minority group will almost certainly be, and remain, a minority of members on decision-making bodies, ranging from Congress to city councils and school boards. Second, to the extent that the members of the majority and of the minority take adversarial positions on crucial issues, the minority group's preferred policies are unlikely to be reflected, to any great extent, in actual policy outcomes.²

Designers of democratic institutions might try to overcome the first challenge by finding ways to boost the proportion of minority group members on decision-making bodies. That is, they could seek to reduce the gap between the descriptive representation of the majority and the minority, perhaps by creating majority-minority districts that would ensure the election of a minority representative. They might also address the second challenge by creating institutions that generate policies closer to minority groups' preferences, i.e.,

¹By permanent minority group, I simply mean an identifiable group in society that comprises a numerical minority, and due to the slow nature of population changes, this minority status is unlikely to change. The present study will investigate blacks as a permanent minority group, but other groups, such as Latinos, Asian Americans, or members of the LGBT community could be considered permanent minority groups as well. I will hereafter refer to a singular such minority group for the sake of clarity.

²Both of these challenges are, of course, contingent upon the size of the minority group. Minority groups that comprise 40% of the population are likely to have much more substantive and descriptive representation than are groups that only comprise 10% of the population.

that increase the substantive representation of minorities, such as establishing a local consent decree with a vulnerable minority population regarding school decisions.

Designing institutions for the purposes of addressing majority/minority representation in democratic societies is difficult due to the tradeoffs required in balancing descriptive and substantive representation. Efforts to boost one form of representation might undermine the other, as is the case with the creation of majority-minority districts (Cameron, Epstein and O'Halloran, 1996). Moreover, efforts to boost the representation of a minority group will necessarily come at the cost of majority representation whenever majority-minority preferences are at odds. Assuming no major restructuring of democratic institutions, increasing the numbers of black legislators requires that we reduce the numbers of white (or Latino, Asian, Native American, etc.) legislators by the same amount. And where members of permanent minority groups differ in their policy preferences from the majority, any policy concessions for minority groups requires that we ignore the policy preferences of the majority. Both of these decreases are problematic in theory and in practice. In practice, several studies have found that increases in minority descriptive representation are linked to lower levels of civic engagement and trust among whites (Gay, 2001; Barreto, Segura and Woods, 2004; Ulbig, 2005). And in theory, giving preferential treatment to the policy concerns of the minority undermines basic principles of majority rule.³ For these reasons, designing institutions for the purposes of addressing majority/minority representation in democratic societies requires identifying how highly members of the majority and the minority value descriptive and substantive representation. It

³But it is important to note that such concerns may not be as consequential when it comes to non-adversarial forms of democracy, such as deliberation.

also requires knowing whether and how members of *both* groups are willing to balance substantive and descriptive representation. Most crucially of all, is there some combination of the two aspects of representation that appears to maximize overall satisfaction of both majority- and minority-group members?

Answering these questions has important implications and consequences for democratic governance. Put simply, whether and how well groups are represented has consequences. With this in mind, the present study makes four main contributions. First, it investigates how citizens, not scholars, evaluate descriptive and substantive representation. Although the stockpile of studies on the two types of representation has grown dramatically, relatively few focus on citizens' preferences and priorities. Second, because this study uses an experiment, it facilitates estimating not only the independent effects of each aspect of representation, but also their interactive effects, which in turn speaks to how citizens make tradeoffs (if they make them at all). Third, the study facilitates deriving implications for maximizing satisfaction with representation across groups. Finally, this study takes into account the effect of perceptions of group size, and how those perceptions shape preferences for representation.

2.1 Representation and its consequences

Representation is important both for what it is and what it does. Viewed through the lens of democratic theory, representation is a fundamental requirement of any modern democracy — without representation, democratic governance is impossible. But representation has instrumental value as well. Many scholars have argued that enhancing the descriptive representation of

minority groups will have important beneficial consequences for those minority groups. The expectation here is that having a representative “like you” will increase the likelihood that the representative will be sensitive to your needs, vote in line with your interests, and be active on issues of importance to your group (Mansbridge, 1999). This should, in turn, lead to greater satisfaction with government outcomes, trust in government (and government officials), greater feelings of efficacy and political incorporation, and increased attention to and knowledge of politics. In terms of political behaviors, we should expect to see greater political engagement, especially in the form of voting and contacting elected officials.

Empirical findings do not paint nearly so rosy a picture. While many studies have found significant effects of representation on the attitudes and behaviors described above, the results are often mixed, contradictory, or non-existent. In addition, a number of studies have suggested that increasing minority representation can have deleterious effects on whites.

A number of studies suggest that the election of minorities can have important consequences for the trust of both minorities and whites. Abney and Hutcheson (1981) found that the election of a black mayor stabilized attitudes toward city government at a time in which trust was declining in the country at-large (but see Bobo and Gilliam Jr, 1990; Pantoja and Segura, 2003; Overby et al., 2005). And in one of only a handful of studies to look across levels of government, Pantoja and Segura (2003) find that Latinos report feeling less alienation when they have more descriptive representation across levels (although the effects of being descriptively represented do not seem to be sufficient to completely ameliorate dissatisfaction with government).

In addition to affecting citizens’ attitudes, representation can also have an effect on political behaviors. Having a representative who shares a con-

stituent's racial (or gender) identity seems to boost contact with that representative (Gay, 2002; Banducci, Donovan and Karp, 2004; Krook and Norris, 2009). Several studies have found that descriptive representation is linked with higher turnout (Browning, Marshall and Tabb, 1984; Bobo and Gilliam Jr, 1990; Whitby, 2007). There are, however, many caveats to this research. The first is that the size (and even mere presence) of a turnout effect is inconsistent across studies. The second is that the effect of black descriptive representation is often conditional, and may be influenced by the length of tenure of black officials and the percent black in the community (Spence, McClerking and Brown, 2009; Spence and McClerking, 2010).

Another note of caution from this literature is that enhancing minority representation can have negative effects for whites. Gay (2001) finds that increased black descriptive representation corresponds with a decrease in white political engagement (see also Bobo and Gilliam Jr, 1990; Barreto, Segura and Woods, 2004). Similarly, Ulbig (2005) finds that high levels of black descriptive representation actually decreases white trust in the courts.

The explanation for these negative effects for whites is somewhat elusive. On the one hand, if whites and blacks have similar desires to be descriptively represented, then any increase in black representation necessarily means a corresponding decrease in white representation. This would lead us to expect higher levels of black representation would correspond with lower trust and engagement for whites.

However, other theories would suggest that whites should be *more* participatory when blacks achieve greater representation. Blumer's (1958) theory of group position suggests that as blacks make political gains (or become a larger proportion of the population), whites' political power will be threatened (Blalock, 1967). We might expect this threat to act as a mobilizer,

thereby increasing white political engagement in the same way that leukocytes are mobilized in response to the growing strength of a perceived threat to the immune system.

2.1.1 Collective effects of representation

The bulk of the studies on the effects of representation have focused on situations in which a citizen was (or was not) directly represented by a member of his own racial or ethnic group. This is the classical conception of representation, and is sometimes referred to as “dyadic” representation. The individual constituent and elected official form a dyad in which that constituent either is or is not represented (descriptively, substantively, etc.).

But focusing solely on dyadic representation can be limiting, especially with respect to members of permanent minority groups. Due to their numerical status, it is unlikely that very many minorities will have dyadic descriptive representation in institutions such as Congress, without some extreme form of gerrymandering.

The problem is even more clear when we move to other forms of government. Consider the case of local city councils. Most city councils are numerically small (typically ranging from five to a dozen members). In localities in which council members are elected from districts, a typical city is likely to only have a handful of minority council members, if they have any at all. Unless minorities are extremely concentrated into a single or a handful of districts, then a great number of local minorities will not be descriptively represented, even if there are minorities on the city council.

However, there are some localities in which local officials are elected at-large. In this case, the dyadic link between constituent and official becomes

murky. In a council of seven members selected at large, how are we to assess the level of descriptive representation received by members of different groups? Since each constituent can be thought of as having seven direct representatives on the city council, we cannot simply treat descriptive representation as occurring or not. Instead, we need to take into account the degree of descriptive representation on the council as a whole.

This is similar in spirit to Weissberg (1978)'s conception of collective representation. In the Weissberg formulation, even if a constituent's own member of Congress does not descriptively or substantively represent him, that does not mean he receives no representation. Instead, he can be represented by the body as a whole through the efforts of other elected officials who are not his dyadic representative.⁴

Applying this to the case of city councils, we can now think of descriptive and substantive representation as occurring collectively. In the case of at-large councils, we can measure the amount of descriptive representation as the total proportion of the council that shares a particular group's identity. So in a town with a 15% black population, a council would be proportionally representative if 15% (1 out of 7 from the previous example) are black. This greatly simplifies talking about levels of descriptive representation. And there is significant research that suggests that collective representation — especially descriptive representation — can be consequential in many of the same ways as direct, dyadic representation (Meier and England, 1984; Herrick and Welch, 1992; Alozie and Manganaro, 1993; Bratton and Ray, 2002; Ulbig, 2005). And in many ways, looking at collective representation can be more illuminating than looking solely at dyadic representation because it is much

⁴This has also been referred to as “surrogate representation,” although this term is somewhat less applicable in the case of local governments that may be at-large rather than based on geographic districts.

easier to observe.

Looking at collective representation carries the benefit of being able to assess the total effect of diversity on legislative outcomes and citizen behaviors. Just because a black does not live in a majority-minority district does not mean that his policy concerns are not being heard, especially if there are many black representatives in the legislature. This is precisely what was found by Hero and Tolbert (1995) with the case of Latinos. If we were to look solely at dyadic representation, our findings would be null. But with the increase in Latinos in Congress, more legislation pertinent to the Latino community was, in fact, getting passed. As such, we might miss the big picture if we focused exclusively on direct representation.⁵

2.1.2 Limitations of existing studies of representation

This existing body of work on representation does not allow us to fully answer the question of whether and how citizens are willing to make tradeoffs between aspects of representation, which is crucial for understanding how best to structure institutions to maximize satisfaction across social groups. In order to advance our understanding of representation, we should focus on a few key things. First, we should focus our attention on how citizens respond to and evaluate aspects of representation. Although behavioral responses such as voting are important for the health and vibrancy of democracy, our primary concern on this front is whether or not different aspects of representation are crucial for citizens' perceptions of fairness and legitimacy. Second, we need to be able to isolate each aspect of representation in question. Existing literature does not allow us to do so, and as such, we are limited in

⁵Although the authors do caution that it is not clear that indirect, collective representation is a substitute for direct substantive representation.

the conclusions we can draw. Finally, the literature needs to investigate seriously the implications of different representational arrangements on different groups in society.

One of the limitations of traditional studies of representation is their inability to isolate different aspects of representation. The studies discussed above demonstrate that different aspects of representation can have tangible consequences for citizens' attitudes and behavior. Many of these studies focus on the consequences of descriptive representation, while others focus on the consequences of substantive or policy representation.

But a point that is identified in this literature is that substantive and descriptive representation often go hand-in-hand. Consider the following example. A black constituent has a black representative in Congress. Not only does the representative share the constituent's racial identity, she is also active on issues of importance to her black constituent, such as sponsoring bills related to civil rights and affirmative action. If we happen to survey her black constituent and found the constituent to hold high levels of trust in government, what are we to conclude is the cause of high trust? Is it because the constituent is descriptively represented? Or because he has a representative in Congress who is active on issues of importance to him? In this case, the answer is ambiguous.

In order to adjudicate between the effects of substantive and descriptive representation, we need to isolate each aspect and observe its consequences. For the moment, let us consider a simplification where both descriptive and substantive representation are dichotomous and either do or do not occur (see Figure 2.1. In order to determine the separate effects of substantive and descriptive representation in this simplification, we would need to observe situations in each of the four boxes from Figure 2.1: both substantive and

descriptive representation, neither substantive nor descriptive representation, substantive representation without descriptive representation, and descriptive representation without substantive representation.

This poses no problem in the abstract. But when we observe representation occurring in the real world, it is unlikely that we will actually observe each of these conditions independently.

The reason for this is intuitive. A large part of the reason why scholars and political elites advocate in favor of descriptive representation is because decision-makers from permanent minority groups tend to behave differently from their white counterparts. Increased descriptive representation has been linked to higher substantive representation (Preston, 1978; Owens, 2005). In addition to affecting substantive representation directly, having minority legislators tends to increase attention to minority issues and cues (Preuhs and Hero, 2011; Minta, 2009; Minta and Sinclair-Chapman, 2012), and minority representation can improve the quality of government services (Marschall and Ruhil, 2007) and alter the effectiveness and composition of the bureaucracy (Eisinger, 1982; Davis, Livermore and Lim, 2011). Similar findings have been demonstrated with the representation of women (Swers, 2005; Celis, 2007). Minority legislators also tend to have different behaviors in and relationships with their districts (Fenno, 2003). And, in line with what Mansbridge (1999) suggests, diversity on decision-making bodies has been shown to alter the content of deliberations (Mendelberg and Oleske, 2000; Chaney, 2006).

Given these findings, it would be hard to argue that descriptive and substantive representation tend to be independent of one another in the real world. Having high levels of descriptive representation tends to also lead to higher levels of substantive representation, on average. At the very least, the evidence is clear that minority and white political elites behave differently

— their behavior and attention to issues tends to be different, even if their voting record does not.

So returning to our simplification, it is unlikely that we will observe each of the four conditions when using observational techniques. Consider the example of blacks and their representatives in Congress. As we know, the vast majority of blacks identify with the Democratic Party, and tend to be very liberal (at least on economic issues). As such, blacks' substantive interests are best represented by Democratic members of Congress. If we were to conduct a survey of black voters, we would find many of them residing in districts represented by white Democrats, some residing in majority-minority districts represented by black Democrats, and still others living in districts represented by white Republicans. So we would observe blacks in cells (1), (2), and (3) from Figure 2.1. But because black political elites are as homogeneous as black voters, what we would often fail to observe is what happens when blacks are descriptively represented, but not substantively represented (e.g., when their member of Congress is a black Republican). Because of this limitation, we could determine the effect of substantive representation alone by comparing cells (1) and (3), and the effect of substantive and descriptive representation versus a lack of both by comparing cells (2) and (3). But we would not be able to identify the direct effect of descriptive representation.

In order to disentangle these two related aspects of representation, we need to move to research designs that allow us to observe each aspect of representation moving independently. The most direct way of doing so is employing an experiment in which we directly manipulate substantive and descriptive representation.⁶

⁶This is not entirely unheard of within the literature on representation. Scherer and Curry (2010) uses an experiment to manipulate the racial composition of the U.S. courts and finds that greater diversity boosts support for courts among blacks, but decreases it

2.2 A different approach to studying representation

The most prevalent types of studies of representation have led to results that are mixed at best. Some studies find support for positive effects of representation, while others have found those effects to be minimal or conditional. And as discussed above, the majority of these studies are unable to disentangle the effects of descriptive representation from other aspects of representation. As such, the conclusions we can draw about the effects of representation (especially descriptive representation) are quite limited.

I argue that in order to move the literature forward, we must shift our focus in two important ways. First, we must use experiments that will enable us to study different aspects of representation in isolation. Second, we should begin asking what it is that citizens want out of representation. It has been well established that maximizing descriptive representation can undermine substantive representation (Cameron, Epstein and O'Halloran, 1996). But we know relatively little about whether citizens put a greater emphasis on achieving policy outcomes, or on having representatives who look like them (and, in turn, feeling more incorporated into the political process) (but see Lublin, 1999; Tate, 2004). I shall deal with each of these in turn, beginning with the latter.

2.2.1 Citizens and representation

Conspicuously absent from a vast majority of studies of representation is an in-depth discussion of what it is that citizens want out of representation. The modal approach has been to take some aspect of representation, be it substantive, descriptive, or symbolic, and test its effects on behaviors and

among whites.

attitudes. Comparably rare are studies that seek to determine which aspects of representation citizens actually find most important.

It might well be the case that increased descriptive (or substantive) representation leads citizens to vote or contact their representatives at higher rates. But we should not take such findings as evidence that citizens actually value or prioritize descriptive (or substantive) representation. These findings could result even if citizens were not actually satisfied with the process of representation or how their democracy operates.

This is a subtle point. I am not suggesting that outcomes such as higher turnout do not matter. Instead, I simply argue that we should seek to increase descriptive (or substantive) representation *not* because it increases turnout, but because it produces government processes more in line with what citizens would want.

The idea that citizens might have preferences about how government processes occur is not ground-breaking. In two related studies, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2001; 2002) find that ordinary citizens are affected not only by the types of policies being produced by Congress, but also by how those policies came about. In Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's parlance, citizens have "process preferences." In contrast to policy preferences which suggest that citizens care primarily about the ideological outcomes of policies, policy preferences suggest that citizens also care about the mechanism through which those policies came about. Because Congress is seen as full of gridlock and partisan bickering, many citizens are turned off and become dissatisfied with the process itself. As a result, no number of policy successes would satisfy citizens who despise the very decision-making process itself. Thus, we should not expect efforts to boost substantive representation to have any significant impact on satisfaction with government in general, or Congress in particular.

We should instead focus on ways to affect the process of decision-making in these bodies.

Similar ideas have been established with regards to the criminal justice system. In many works, Tyler has argued that an important consideration for judicial outcomes is procedural justice.⁷ Tyler (1988) argues that evaluations of judicial outcomes on the part of citizens is not solely attributable to the content of the outcome itself. Instead, factors such as the perceived fairness of the process, the honesty of judicial officials, and the extent to which representation is available all factor into evaluations of decisions.

Levels of procedural justice in turn affect peoples' satisfaction with judicial outcomes and their perceptions of the legitimacy of government (Tyler, 1994). This can have direct consequences for evaluations of the legitimacy of policing (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003), and levels of perceived procedural justice can have important implications for whether communities are willing to acquiesce to government policies (Tyler and DeGoey, 1995; Gibson, 1989).

If we treat the level of descriptive representation as one component of the decision-making process, then it is clear that we can evaluate representation within the framework laid out by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse and Tyler. The diversity of decision-making bodies can be seen as having both a direct and indirect effect on process preferences or evaluations of procedural justice.

The direct effect is that diversity might be, in and of itself, something that is desired in the decision-making process. Indeed, studies have shown that racial composition of decision-making bodies can influence evaluations of those bodies' legitimacy (Azzi and Jost, 2006), and Tate (2004) finds that descriptive representation is indeed a component of representation that is important to them. The indirect effect is that diversity may affect the oper-

⁷This literature finds its roots in the work of Thibaut, Walker et al. (1975).

ation of decision-making bodies, which will in turn affect peoples' evaluation of those bodies.

Few studies have dealt directly with the ways in which people might value one aspect of representation or another. A notable exception is the work of Tate (2004). In it, Tate argues that blacks differ from other Americans in how they evaluate their representatives. They want their representatives to be more than simple voting delegates — they place a higher emphasis on issues of constituency service and ensuring a fair share of Congressional pork. Moreover, she finds that blacks do tend to be more knowledgeable when their representative is black (although they are no more trusting of the institution of Congress as a whole).

This work sets a firm groundwork on which we can derive notions of how citizens evaluate representation. Where Tate (2004) falls short is disentangling the effects of descriptive representation from the effects of substantive representation. Because it relies on a national sample, the National Black Election Study on which Tate's work is based cannot investigate all four boxes in Figure 2.1. Those blacks who were actually descriptively represented were also almost assuredly substantively represented as well. Since the overwhelming majority of black voters are Democrats, and a correspondingly high proportion of black legislators are liberal Democrats, then it is unlikely that there were many (if any) blacks who were descriptively represented but not substantively represented. In other words, in the real world, descriptive and substantive representation are often entangled. We need to not only develop expectations about how citizens, both black and white, would make tradeoffs between these two aspects of representation, but also to use a research design that will allow us to investigate each aspect's independent effect and their joint effect. To accomplish this, I lay out the notion

of representation preferences and then discuss an experimental design that will facilitate a test of theoretical expectations.

2.2.2 Toward a theory of representation preferences

The idea of ordinary citizens having representation preferences is in accordance with the work that has already been done on citizens' process preferences, preferences for procedural justice, and even early work examining the representational link between citizens and their representatives. Where this notion of representation preferences differs from early work on representation such as Miller and Stokes (1963) and Kuklinski (1978) is that early works are focused primarily on policy representation, i.e., the congruence between representatives and their constituents on political policies, whereas this notion of representation preferences extends beyond the sphere of policy alone. In line with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), I argue that citizens have preferences not only about what policy outcomes there are (and how they come about), but also for how decision-making bodies should be composed.

For the purposes of this study, I will be focusing exclusively on two aspects of representation: descriptive and substantive representation. There are many more dimensions of representation that are important, but none have been as well studied in the domain of permanent minority groups.

So what expectations should we have with regard to citizens' preferences for aspects of representation? What should we expect citizens to prioritize? *Ceteris paribus*, we should expect that higher levels of both substantive and descriptive representation should be preferred to lower levels of either or both. In other words, more representation is better.

A more challenging question arises when citizens are forced to make trade-

offs between aspects of representation. All citizens, whether members of the majority or the minority, often need to make tradeoffs between aspects of representation. For members of permanent minority groups, the numerical reality dictates that they will be unlikely to achieve both substantive and descriptive representation, at least not when their interests do not overlap with those of the majority. Even with institutional interventions, it is necessary to choose what levels of substantive and descriptive representation are satisfactory. If descriptive representation is the sole desire of members of permanent minority groups, then we would expect them to support institutional designs where candidates from their identity group could run separately from majority candidates, which would give members of the minority group ultimate say over who represents them. However, such institutional designs mean that majority representatives would have no incentive to be responsive to the policy wishes of the minority. Conversely, if substantive representation is paramount, then members of the minority should seek to create as many “influence districts” as possible to ensure that the maximum number of legislators are forced to pay heed to the interests of the minority.

For members of the majority, it would be feasible to have high levels of both descriptive and substantive representation. In fact, given a first-past-the-post election system and majority rule policy-making, it is theoretically possible for the majority to hold all elected offices and dictate every policy. However, people in general are committed to democratic principles (such as the argument laid out in *Federalist 10*), and should seek to cede at least some power to the minority.⁸ But it is an open question how much of a reduction

⁸A similar argument has been advanced by Rawls (1971). If citizens are rational and the future is uncertain, then they should act to improve the welfare of the worst-off individual (since any individual could theoretically be that worst-off individual). In the context of representation, the argument would be that members of the majority do not know if they will be able to maintain their numerical superiority *ad infinitum*, and so they should

in substantive or descriptive representation members of the majority will accept. Given the findings of Gay (2001) and others, there is evidence to suggest any representational gains made by minorities will have immediate negative effects on the majority.

From the preceding, we have two main questions. First, what do minorities want from representation? How do they prioritize substantive and descriptive representation? Second, what are members of the majority willing to give up? If we are interested in satisfying both groups, and satisfying minorities necessitates that we augment their representation at the expense of the majority, we need to know what concessions members of the majority are willing to make.

Given that citizens often need to make some tradeoffs regarding representation, how should we conceptualize preferences for different aspects of representation? One straightforward way to think about representation preferences is to think of them as how citizens prioritize the different aspects of representation. Although an ordinary person might not have a rank-order of aspects of representation in his head, we can induce him to make hard choices between the aspects of representation in order to tease out which aspect(s) is most important, and which are less so. In other words, I conceive a citizen's representation preferences as how he would make tradeoffs between different aspects of representation, if he were forced to do so.

In order to examine this, we need to force citizens to make tradeoffs between the forms of representation. We can accomplish this using experiments. Although we cannot simultaneously observe citizens under multiple different permutations of representation, we can construct experimental treatments that investigate different combinations of descriptive and substantive representation at least a modicum of fair representation for minority groups

sentation, and in differing amounts. And by looking at average evaluations across these combinations, we can determine how members of the minority and the majority prioritize each aspect of representation.

2.2.3 Experimental design

For this experiment, I investigate the notion of representation preferences across two aspects of representation. I vary the level of substantive representation by manipulating whether the outcome of a decision-making process favors the majority or the minority. I vary the level of descriptive representation by describing different combinations of majority and minority group members on the decision-making body. The levels of descriptive representation are low, medium, and high, vis-a-vis the minority group.

The treatment itself is delivered via a vignette that describes a local policy decision. The decision regards where to build a new school in a community, with a body of citizens deciding between a location in a predominantly white or a predominantly black neighborhood (see Appendix for wording). The committee is then described as having 5%, 15%, or 50% black members. The outcome is either to build the school in the predominantly white or the predominantly black neighborhood. With respect to the minority group, we then have the resulting six treatments displayed in Figure 2.2.

Using this experiment and the notion of representation preferences, we can derive expectations for how members of the majority and the minority would respond to the two aspects of representation. The first of which, described above, is that:

Hypothesis 1. *All else being equal, citizens of both the majority and minority will always prefer a combination of both high substantive and descriptive*

representation to any other alternative.

Hypothesis 1 derives from the assumption that citizens are rational, and that more representative situations will necessarily be preferred to situations in which citizens must make tradeoffs.

For members of the minority, I pose two related hypotheses regarding how they will prioritize substantive and descriptive representation. They are:

Hypothesis 2. *When descriptive representation is below parity, minorities will be satisfied with government decisions only if the outcome is favorable.*

Hypothesis 3. *When descriptive representation is at or near parity, minorities will be satisfied with the government decisions regardless of whether the outcome is favorable or unfavorable.*

In other words, I hypothesize that substantive representation is sufficient, but not necessary, for satisfying members of the minority. When substantive outcomes are unfavorable, I hypothesize that descriptive representation is sufficient for satisfying members of the minority. From the combination of Hypotheses 2 and 3, we can derive how minority group members will make tradeoffs between descriptive and substantive representation. If both hypotheses hold, then we can infer that minorities prioritize descriptive representation over substantive representation.

For members of the majority, the concerns are somewhat different. Because members of the majority often have the luxury of high levels of descriptive representation, I posit that they will be unlikely to be much affected by a slight reduction in descriptive representation. In addition, the numerical superiority of being a majority group also brings with it the possibility of dictating policy outcomes, minimizing the importance of being descriptively

represented.⁹ To wit:

Hypothesis 4. *Among members of the majority, satisfaction with government decisions will be unaffected by the racial composition of the decision-making body.*

To visualize what these hypotheses would predict in terms of empirical results, we can think about all the potential empirical outcomes. Figure 2.3 displays the potential independent and joint effects of substantive and descriptive representation that we might find. Sub-figure A would indicate that neither descriptive nor substantive representation has any effect on evaluations of the fairness of the decision making process. Sub-figure B indicates a positive effect for descriptive representation, but a minimal effect for substantive representation. Sub-figure C shows the opposite: a strong positive effect for substantive representation, but no effect for descriptive representation. Sub-figure D illustrates independent effects of substantive and descriptive representation. Sub-figures E and F demonstrate tradeoffs between the two aspects of representation. In E, there is a complementary effect of descriptive and substantive representation, but substantive representation is prioritized more highly. Substantive representation is always perceived as fairer than a lack of substantive representation, but the effects of substantive representation are enhanced by high descriptive representation. In a sense, this result would indicate that citizens are unwilling to make tradeoffs between the two aspects of representation: in order to satisfy citizens, they must have both substantive and descriptive representation. F, on the other hand, illustrates a situation in which descriptive representation can compensate for a lack

⁹It should be noted here that the experimental treatments in this study involve a minimum of 50% descriptive representation for the majority. I am agnostic as to the expectations were majority group members to consist of less than 50% of the decision-making body.

of substantive representation. When the substantive outcome is unfavorable, satisfaction can remain high when there is a high level of descriptive representation. But when descriptive representation is low, only favorable substantive outcomes will result in high levels of satisfaction.

With regard to the hypotheses laid out above, Hypotheses 2 and 3 refer to a situation such as in sub-figure F for the minority group. For the majority group, Hypothesis 4 predicts a finding similar to that in sub-figure C.

2.3 Innumeracy and representation

A major complication of peoples' representational preferences is the issue of innumeracy. Thus far, I have discussed preferences for forms of representation in the abstract. I have laid out the reasons why descriptive representation might be particularly salient to members of permanent minority groups. I have also argued that the amount of descriptive representation necessary to maximize satisfaction with government may be more than traditionally thought.

However, all of this hinges on an important point that has been left implicit thus far: the characteristics of the community in which people live. When we say that blacks should have representation proportional to their population, we are basing our judgment of representation on the demographic characteristics of the community itself. So what is proportional in one community is not proportional in another. In communities where there are few blacks, we would expect there to be correspondingly few blacks in decision-making offices. But in communities that have sizeable black populations, there should be high levels of descriptive representation in government.¹⁰

¹⁰I have left out here situations in which permanent minority groups are not, in fact, minorities. There are many cities in the United States in which blacks (or Latinos) are

It is easy to amend the hypotheses above to take community characteristics explicitly into account. We could suppose that whites' and blacks' preferences for representation will be based on their relative standings in the community. However, things are not so simple as they appear. An underlying problem with gauging people's expectations and evaluations of representation is the problem of innumeracy.

Innumeracy is a general term given to peoples' difficulties comprehending numbers and mathematical concepts. In the present context, I use innumeracy to refer to peoples' unsteady evaluations of the demographic makeup of their own community. For example, if a town is 85% white and 15% black, then we might expect blacks to want something around 15% of elected officials to be black, and whites to want something around 85% of elected officials to be white. But what if citizens tend to have inaccurate estimates of their community's demographics? What if a black resident believes that blacks comprise 40% of the community? Would we expect them to be satisfied with 15% descriptive representation? Or would we expect them to want representation commensurate with what they believe is the size of the black community? If the latter is true, then it is unlikely that even truly proportional representation will satisfy citizens.

The problem of innumeracy is not simply hypothetical hand-wringing. There is a substantial, and growing, literature suggesting that people are very poor at perceiving their immediate surroundings. Nadeau, Niemi and Levine (1993), Alba, Rumbaut and Marotz (2005), and Wong (2007) find that people greatly overestimate the size of minority populations in their own

actually the largest ethnic group. However, examining preferences for representation in such communities is beyond the scope of this project. In order to do so, one would have to purposely sample such communities, since they are relatively unlikely to comprise a meaningful portion of a randomly drawn national population.

community and in the country at-large. This overestimation is so strong that many people believe that whites have become a minority of the population. As a result, we could expect levels of racial threat to be much higher, and, as Alba, Nee and Nee-Vandenberg's findings, this can lead to greater animosity toward minority groups (see also Wright Jr, 1977; Glaser, 1994).

The potential challenges posed by innumeracy are directly related to Blumer (1958)'s theory of group position and group threat. According to Blumer, as minority groups become larger and threaten the dominant group's superiority, members of the dominant group will respond with higher prejudice and animosity toward the offending minority group. This has generally been theoretically and empirically linked to actual population proportions — countless studies support the idea that higher group proportions lead to higher racial animosity (Quillian, 1995).

But there is an indirect effect as well. In order for group size to have an effect, the size of that group must be perceived. So in the case of whites and blacks, whites should only negatively react to larger black populations if they actually perceive that population. If, for whatever reason, a member of the dominant group does not perceive there to be a substantial minority population, they should not exhibit any higher racial threat (see Wong et al., 2012).

The converse is also true. If a member of the dominant group perceives there to be a growing number of minorities, she should exhibit higher levels of racial threat. This phenomenon is likely to occur even if the facts do not support peoples' perceptions, although Alba, Nee and Nee-Vandenberg (2005) finds that both have independent effects. In short, as people perceive there to be more members of racial minorities, they should also exhibit higher levels of racial threat (but see Wong, 2007)

This increase in racial threat is likely to come into conflict with people's evaluations of representation. On the one hand is group conflict theory which suggests that as minority group size increases, we would expect members of the majority to exhibit greater discrimination and animosity toward the minority group. It is reasonable to extrapolate that members of the majority who are feeling threatened by a minority group will be less supportive of increased minority representation. On the other hand, if people hold strong preferences about political processes, and a component of these preferences is support for procedural fairness, then higher numbers of minorities should dictate a corresponding increase in minority representation. So if someone who is white (mis)perceives the black population to be 40% and he believes that decision-making bodies should look roughly similar to the communities they represent, then he should support levels of black representation up to 40%. We might expect this to take place regardless of whether the black population is actually 40%, or if it is much lower.

This complication of innumeracy creates competing expectations for the response of whites to minority representation. But it also will affect minorities' evaluations of their representation in elected bodies. Members of minority groups are generally no better than whites at estimating how large their racial group is within their community (or the nation at-large). Wong (2007) finds that blacks generally estimate their own population percentage in the U.S. to be around 38%, when it was only around 12% as of the 2000 U.S. Census (see also Tate, 2004). Similarly, the mean percent black in local communities in Wong (2007)'s study was 22%, yet black respondents thought their local community was, on average, about 50% black.

As a result of these poor estimates of group size, we would also expect members of permanent minority groups to desire greater proportions of elected

bodies to share their racial identity. It is possible that a desire for greater-than-proportional representation on the part of permanent minority groups is, in fact, due to their belief that they make up a greater percent of the population. So if a black would be most satisfied with a city council that is 50% black and 50% white, the cause could be either that he desires to have an equal voice at the policymaking table, or it could be that he thinks that 50% is actually proportional to the black population in town.

As a result of this, I posit the following hypothesis regarding innumeracy:

Hypothesis 5. *Preferences for descriptive representation of both majority and minority group members will be based on how they perceive their community's composition*

To think about Hypothesis 5, consider two minority group members from a community that is 15% black. One believes his group makes up 15% of the population, the other believes his group makes up 50% of the population. If we were to compare the two, then a level of descriptive representation of 50% would be high to the first minority group members, but only proportional to the perceived population of the second minority group member.

For whites, the expectations are somewhat less clear. One possibility that perceiving there to be more blacks in the community than blacks' true numbers will lead to an increase in racial threat, and in turn this will lead to a reduction in support for black representation. The other possibility is that perceiving there to be more blacks will lead to higher expectations of how much black representation is fair, and in turn this will lead to an increase in support for black representation. Without past empirical work to guide us, it is not clear which expectation we should expect. As such, Chapter 5 will test between these two possibilities with no *a priori* hypothesis as to which

story is correct.

Chapter 5 will explore this issue of innumeracy in depth. In Chapters 3 and 4, I will explore blacks' and whites' evaluations of representation based solely on the level of substantive and descriptive representation in the experimental treatment. In Chapter 5, I then condition these evaluations on how whites and blacks perceive their own community.

	No descriptive representation	Descriptive representation
Substantive representation	(1)	(2)
No substantive representation	(3)	(4)

Figure 2.1: A simple typology of representation

		Descriptive representation		
		Low	Medium	High
Substantive outcome	Favored blacks	Treatment 1	Treatment 2	Treatment 3
	Favored whites	Treatment 4	Treatment 5	Treatment 6

Figure 2.2: Treatment conditions

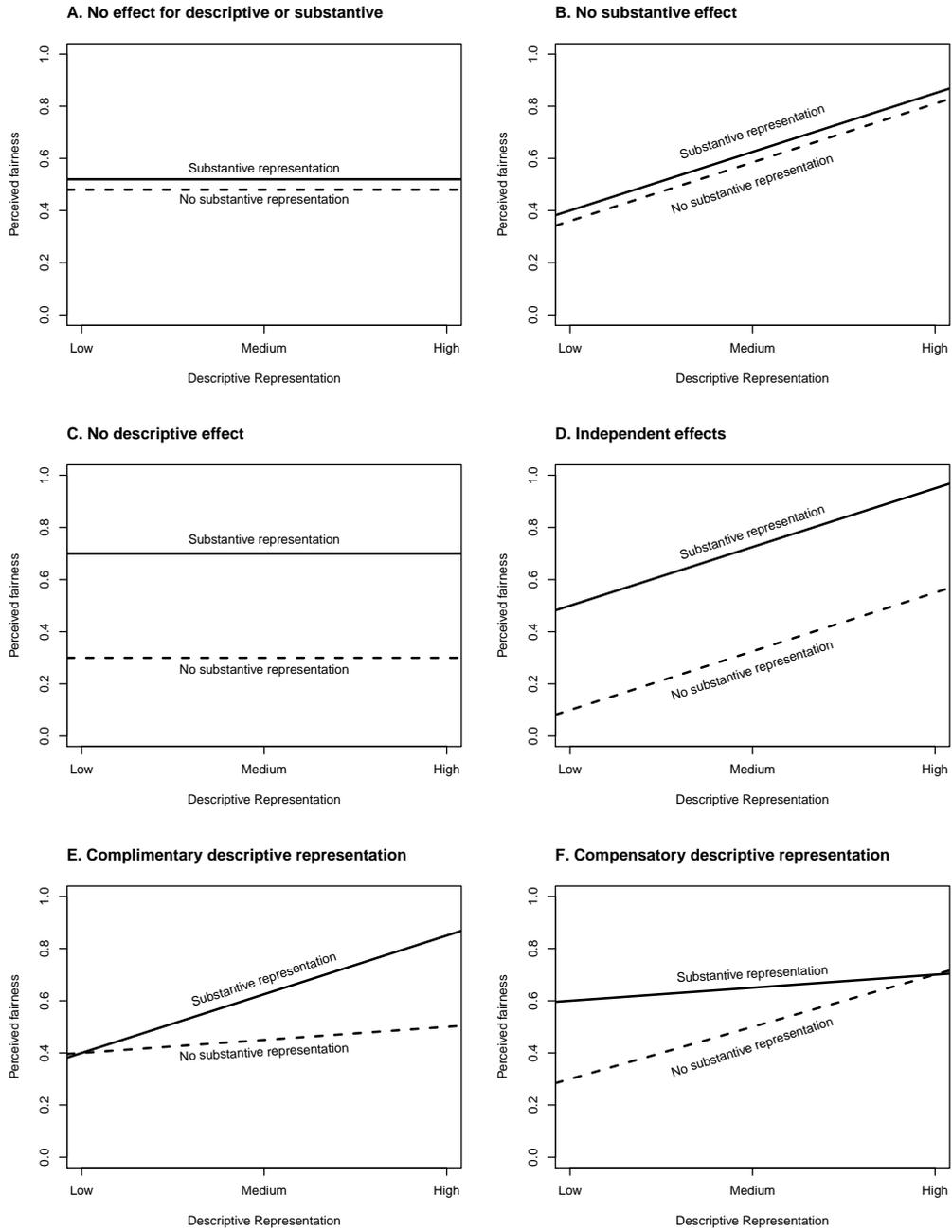


Figure 2.3: Potential empirical outcomes

CHAPTER 3

THE INDEPENDENT EFFECTS OF DESCRIPTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION

In order to investigate the independent effects of descriptive and substantive representation, I employ an experiment that manipulates each aspect in a local decision-making setting. The decision itself is about whether to build a new school in a predominantly white or a predominantly black neighborhood. The treatment is administered via a vignette that describes some background for the decision, the composition of the decision-making body, and the ultimate outcome of the decision-making process.

The issue of school location was chosen for a number of reasons. First, it is *prima facie* non-partisan. Whether to build a school in one neighborhood or another does not have any inherent partisan or ideological components. As such, I am avoiding the complication of partisanship.¹

Second, the issue of school location also facilitated having outcomes that favor whites versus blacks. For many other policy outcomes, whether the outcome is favorable or not is dependent upon a person's policy preferences. In this case, the decision itself has substantive implications for whites and blacks directly; having the school built in a black neighborhood provides a direct benefit to blacks as a group.

¹Given the importance of partisanship to American politics, it might seem odd to select an issue domain that is non-partisan. But the main focus of the present project is to test preferences for forms of representation. By (mostly) removing partisanship from the mix, I can isolate the effects of substantive outcome without having to account for partisan filters. This issue will be revisited in Chapter 5.

3.1 Subject recruitment

Subjects were recruited for this experiment using Amazon.com’s “Mechanical Turk” (MTurk). MTurk is an online marketplace where individuals can complete short tasks for pay. Those needing tasks completed by humans (a.k.a. a Requester) post a listing for a “Human Intelligence Task” (HIT) that describes the task and how much workers will be compensated. For very short HITs, workers might only be paid a few cents. Longer and more difficult tasks tend to pay more, although the effective hourly rate subjects are paid may not be higher (due to the higher amount of time needed to complete the task).

Requesters can set a number of stipulations on who can complete the task and how long workers have to complete the task. For this experiment, workers were restricted to those who live in the United States. Location is determined by the bank account linked to the worker’s profile and not to where the worker actually completes her work. As a result, it is possible to have surveys completed from abroad by workers who have a U.S. address and/or bank account.²

The HIT itself asked workers to “[c]omplete a short survey about politics and local government.” Workers were then directed to a proprietary survey website where the present experiment was hosted. Workers were paid \$0.40 for their time, and the survey took on average 4 minutes and 18 seconds.³

²This did occur in the present study. 36 workers completed the HIT from IP addresses not in the United States. 11 of these were IP addresses associated with India, 5 from the United Kingdom, 4 from Macedonia, 3 from Canada, 2 each from Georgia, Germany, and Thailand, and 1 each from Australia, Brazil, Israel, Mongolia, Netherlands, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Spain, Tunisia, and Turkey. These foreign IP addresses were excluded from the analyses presented below, although their inclusion does not alter the substantive findings.

³This works out to an average hourly rate of \$5.58. This raises a host of ethical questions for social scientists looking to use MTurk as a recruitment tool. On the one hand, this effective hourly rate is higher than the majority of HITs on the marketplace.

Data collection lasted for around five days.

3.1.1 Limitations and advantages

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to using MTurk. The chief advantages of using MTurk are the speed with which studies can be conducted and the relatively low cost of gathering national samples. The present study began data collection on a Tuesday and the sample was complete by Sunday. In addition to taking only five days, MTurk data are available while the HIT is in the field. So researchers can examine the data before collection is completed. If a survey instrument appears not to be working, or there is some other problem with the HIT itself, researchers can pause or cancel the HIT before it is complete. That same HIT can then be re-posted in the MTurk marketplace once any problems are corrected.

By far the biggest advantage of using MTurk is the ease and cost with which researchers can obtain a national sample. For a survey with a target sample size of 500 and a pay rate of \$0.75 per HIT, total costs would be \$375 plus fees collected by MTurk (typically 10%). This compares very favorably with the tens of thousands of dollars it costs to put a similar survey in the field with a major survey house.

However, MTurk is not without its disadvantages. Two important limitations to note are that the MTurk sample is certainly not a representative national sample, and there are additional concerns about how close of atten-

At the same time, the rate itself is below the U.S. minimum wage. While this is not as much of a concern when administering tasks to MTurk workers living outside the U.S. (a great number of whom live in India where wages are much lower), using a U.S. sample requires balancing the needs of obtaining an affordable sample and still offering reasonable compensation for the task. \$0.40 was chosen as a target payment amount largely based upon the research done by Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) that investigated how different pay rates and completion times related to the speed of data collection

tion workers are paying to the task itself.⁴ The former question represents the biggest challenge to using MTurk data to complete social scientific studies.

A number of studies have begun assessing how representative MTurk samples are vis-a-vis the general population as sampled by representative surveys, student samples, and local convenience samples. The general consensus is that MTurk samples are much more demographically diverse than student samples, and at least as diverse as local convenience samples. Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) discusses these concerns in depth with specific regard to MTurk's political science applications. In that paper, Berinsky, Huber and Lenz analyzed the demographic composition of student and adult samples (from the work of Kam, Wilking and Zechmeister (2007) which compared traditional student samples with local adults), and two adult samples from different cities (from the work of Berinsky and Kinder (2006)). The authors find that their MTurk samples compared favorably to these other data sources. The MTurk sample was about as racially diverse as the adult samples, and about as educated as samples drawn from Ann Arbor, MI and Princeton, NJ. The MTurk sample was older than the student sample, but younger than the local convenience samples. Finally, the MTurk data were

⁴This latter concern can be ameliorated through a number of means. The first is that each HIT must be accepted or rejected by the requester. So if it appears that a worker skipped the survey entirely, the requester can reject that particular HIT and that worker will not get paid for completing it. A second safeguard is to require workers to enter in a randomly generated code that is only provided once all survey items are complete. A third approach is to introduce an instrumental manipulation check as described by Oppenheimer, Meyvis and Davidenko (2009). This approach entails giving a reasonably lengthy body of instructions prior to a question that direct subjects to do something other than simply answer the question. In Oppenheimer, Meyvis and Davidenko's case, in the instructions subjects were asked to ignore the question prompt and instead click on the title of the page to advance to the next question. Subjects who did so passed the manipulation check, whereas subjects that read the question below and answered it failed the check. Fourth and finally, traditional manipulation checks can be conducted to ensure that subjects at least received the intended treatment. The present study included both a traditional manipulation check and required subjects to complete the entire survey to receive an authentication code.

less skewed by party than any of the local convenience samples.

Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) also compare a sample gathered using MTurk to the political science gold standard, the ANES. Compared to the ANES, Berinsky, Huber and Lenz's MTurk sample is slightly more female, younger, poorer, and more likely to rent rather than own their home. The proportion of white respondents is nearly identical, although MTurk has fewer black respondents. The MTurk sample is also comparable to the ANES sample with regards to geographic coverage of the U.S. (although MTurk does have slightly more respondents from the Northeast than does the ANES).

From these comparisons, Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) conclude that MTurk data are somewhat less representative of true national random samples such as the ANES, but are better than student samples and at least as good as local samples.⁵ The appropriateness of MTurk data is of course dependent upon the intended application. For most political science applications, MTurk will yield results preferable to a student sample and preferable to a local sample, depending on the size and diversity of the locality.

3.1.2 Basic demographics

For the present study, MTurk does pose some limitations. MTurk data tend to be somewhat less racially diverse than the ANES or a local sample drawn from a diverse community. In particular, there are relatively few blacks in MTurk samples (Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) found about 4.4% black). As a result, it was necessary to collect a larger than usual sample size in order to ensure that there would be enough black subjects to investigate

⁵This conclusion is echoed by Buhrmester, Kwang and Gosling (2011) with regard to the use of MTurk for psychological experiments.

their preferences for representation.⁶ For this reason, a total of 1200 HITs were completed by MTurk workers.

The basic demographic characteristics of this MTurk sample are displayed in column 2 of Table 3.1 and compared to the 2008 ANES. Overall, the match between my MTurk sample and a nationally representative sample is fairly good.⁷ The MTurk sample is more male and younger. In addition, the proportion of the sample that is black is much lower than in the ANES. Finally, the MTurk sample is slightly more Democratic than is the ANES sample.

Table 3.1: Demographic comparison of MTurk and ANES

Demographics	MTurk	ANES (2008)	Reduced MTurk
Female	42%	55%	44%
Age	31	47	32
Race			
White	78%	79%	92%
Black	7%	12%	8%
Latino	6%	9%	0%
Party ID			
Democrat	44%	42%	42%
Republican	39%	19%	40%
Mean Party ID	2.1	2.3	2.1
Total N	1155	2322	961

For the present project, I am only interested in the representation preferences of blacks and whites. Eliminating Latinos, Asian Americans, and other racial and ethnic groups from the sample decreases the total N to 961 (79 of whom are black) and results in the demographics presented in column 4 of Table 3.1. Eliminating Latinos and Asian Americans from the sample makes

⁶In addition to collecting a larger than typical sample to get higher numbers of black respondents, a nationally representative survey is also currently being fielded by the Cooperative Campaign Analysis Project that replicates the present findings.

⁷In fact, this match is much closer than that reported in Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012).

the resulting sample slightly more female, slightly older, and less Democratic.

3.2 Treatment vignette and variables

One caveat that bears mentioning here is the construction of the substantive representation manipulation. In the literature on representation, substantive representation is almost always linked to whether a policy outcome is in line with a person's policy preferences. This tradition dates back to the classic studies of representation such as Miller and Stokes (1963). However, in this case I am not actually measuring subject's preferences for the policy in question. At no point in time do I ask subjects to weigh in on whether they believe the new school should be built in the predominantly white or predominantly black neighborhood.

Instead, I assume that group interest is a reasonable proxy for substantive interests. In other words, when the outcome favors blacks as a whole (by rebuilding the school in a neighborhood dominated by blacks), I assume that black subjects will be more substantively represented than when the outcome favored whites. This assumption seems warranted, at least in the case of blacks. Work by Dawson (1995) laid the groundwork for the theory of linked fate. The theory of linked fate argues that when evaluating policies, blacks will be influenced more by how the policy affects their racial group as a whole than they will by how the policy affects them personally.⁸

For this reason, we should expect that locating the school in the black neighborhood should correspond with what the preferences of blacks would be, were we to measure them. I make this assumption for whites as well, although whether or not this assumption holds is not clear. It might be the

⁸Empirical support for this theory has been found across several issue domains (see Kinder and Winter, 2001; Gay, 2004)

case that whites who are conscious to past discriminatory decisions regarding the provision of public goods to black neighborhoods might favor improving schools in black neighborhoods as a matter of policy. If this is the case, it would dilute any experimental effects of substantive representation on whites.

3.2.1 Vignettes

The vignette employed in this experiment read:

Suppose your community's local government has appointed a committee consisting of 20 registered voters from the community. The purpose of the committee is to recommend the location of a new school, which will replace an existing school. Chances are high that this is the last new school your community will be able to build in a long time.

The committee identified two equally deserving locations. Each of the locations badly needs a new school. They differ in that one of the locations is in a predominantly white neighborhood, the other location in a predominantly African-American neighborhood.

This committee consisting of [18/15/10] white members and [2/5/10] black members has been holding hearings through the community and just announced its decision: the new school will replace the old school in the [white/African-American] neighborhood.

Subjects were randomly assigned to have 2, 5, or 10 black members of the committee, and the substantive outcome was randomly assigned to either the white or the black neighborhood. The results of this randomization can be seen in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Treatment conditions

		Descriptive representation		
		Low	Medium	High
Substantive outcome	Favored blacks	Treatment 1 N=145	Treatment 2 N=185	Treatment 3 N=148
	Favored whites	Treatment 4 N=167	Treatment 5 N=170	Treatment 6 N=146

3.2.2 Variables

I use only limited covariate adjustment in the models described below.⁹ Three variables are of importance here. The first is party identification. This is measured on a 7-point scale and rescaled to run from 0 to 1 (0 = strong Democrat, 1 = strong Republican). Although the decision-making process described in the treatment vignettes is ostensibly non-partisan, the pervasiveness of party may still influence whether people support improving predominantly white or predominantly black neighborhoods.

On a related note, a 5-point scale of ideology is also included as a control variable. This is included for two reasons. The first is identical to the logic laid out above. The second is that studies have shown ideological differences in people’s process preferences (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002). If liberals and conservative differ in their ideal decision-making process, then they could also differ in how they respond to varying levels of descriptive and substantive representation.

Finally, gender is also included as a control variable. This operates under the theory that men and women might differ in their approaches to decision-

⁹There is continuing debate over the merits of covariate adjustment in the analysis of experimental results. I take the advice of Senn (1994), who cautions against introducing covariates to adjust for imbalance, and recommends only including covariates of substantive interest (an analysis of balance across treatment conditions can be found in the Appendix). Others argue vehemently against using covariates at all (Freedman, 2008), although such arguments may be overly conservative (see Green, 2009). If I run the experimental analyses including only treatment condition and race, which is central to my substantive story, the results remain essentially unchanged.

making. For example, it could be the case that women tend to prefer representation that is more consensual, where all groups have an equal voice at the table (c.f., Karpowitz, Mendelberg and Shaker, 2012). If this is the case, then some of the heterogeneity in response to treatment could be due to the respondent’s gender.

Three key outcome variables were used in the experiment.¹⁰ Each variable captures a slightly different component of evaluations of representation (although the results suggest that they behave very similarly). Each outcome variable was a Likert-scale measuring fairness or satisfaction. The first asked subjects if they thought the “decision-making was unbiased and fair to the whole community.” The second asked if the “process used to make the decision was fair.” The final outcome measure asked specifically about descriptive representation, and asked subjects how satisfied they would be with a committee with that racial composition in their own community.

3.3 Results

3.3.1 Effects of descriptive representation

The results for each of the three key outcome measures are displayed in Table 3.2 below. Regardless of the outcome measure chosen, the basic relationship between descriptive representation and perceptions of fairness remains the same. Of the three covariates included (gender, party identification, and ideology), only ideology has any effect on perceptions of fairness. For descriptive representation, the excluded category is high black representation

¹⁰Two other outcome measures were also collected that asked about the fairness of the decision-making process to blacks and whites, respectively. These were included primarily as checks to make sure that the treatment vignettes had face validity with regards to their effect on fairness perceptions.

(50% of decision-makers were black). Coefficient estimates are the result of an OLS linear regression.¹¹

Table 3.2: Independent effects of descriptive representation

Variable	Community		Process		Composition	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.63	0.02	0.67	0.02	0.61	0.02
Low Descriptive	-0.10	0.02	-0.17	0.02	-0.11	0.02
Med Descriptive	-0.09	0.02	-0.13	0.02	-0.08	0.02
Black	-0.05	0.05	-0.05	0.05	-0.13	0.06
Black*Low Descriptive	-0.14	0.08	-0.10	0.08	-0.05	0.08
Black*Med Descriptive	0.05	0.07	-0.08	0.08	0.06	0.08
Female	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.02
PartyID	-0.06	0.04	-0.05	0.04	-0.12	0.04
Ideology	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01

The first column of Table 3.2 shows the effect of the descriptive representation treatment on subjects' evaluations of how fair the decision-making process was to all members of the community. Both low and medium levels of black descriptive representation are associated with lower perceptions of fairness for both blacks and whites. Perceptions of fairness to the community are generally similar when black descriptive representation is low or medium, and substantially higher when black descriptive representation is high. This indicates that for both members of the majority and the minority, high levels of minority representation are important for perceptions of representational fairness.

Interestingly, blacks do not in general hold more negative evaluations of the fairness of the process. In addition, there is not a consistent interaction between race and treatment conditions, which indicates that both whites and blacks tend to respond to treatment in a similar way. However, blacks who received the low descriptive representation condition do appear to be more

¹¹The results are identical when an ordered logistic regression is used. OLS results are presented solely for the ease of interpretation.

cynical about the fairness of the process than their white counterparts given the same treatment. On a scale from 0 to 1, where 1 is the highest perception of fairness, whites in the lowest descriptive representation condition have a mean fairness perception of 0.53, compared to 0.34 for similarly treated blacks.

Figure 3.2 displays this relationship visually. The dashed line represents how fairness to the whole community was perceived by whites; the solid line represents how fairness to the whole community was perceived by blacks. All other variables are held at their median value. Across all three treatment conditions, whites tend to have somewhat higher perceptions of fairness. However, this difference is almost nonexistent under the medium representation condition, and very small (about 0.05) in the high descriptive representation condition.

The second set of results from Table 3.2 shows the effect of descriptive representation on perceived fairness of the decision-making process itself. Instead of referencing the outcome from the vignette, this dependent variable is explicitly concerned with whether the process used to arrive at the decision was fair. For this reason, we should see representational (and process) preferences coming into play far more than a measure that includes, at least to some extent, whether or not the outcome was perceived as fair.

As Table 3.2 shows, the effect of descriptive representation on satisfaction with the process is even stronger than its effect on perceptions of fairness to the community. As with the earlier dependent variable, both the low and medium levels of black descriptive representation result in lower evaluations of the fairness. But for both of these groups, the size of the experimental effect is stronger than with perceptions of fairness toward the community.

As with the previous dependent variable, blacks exhibit systematically

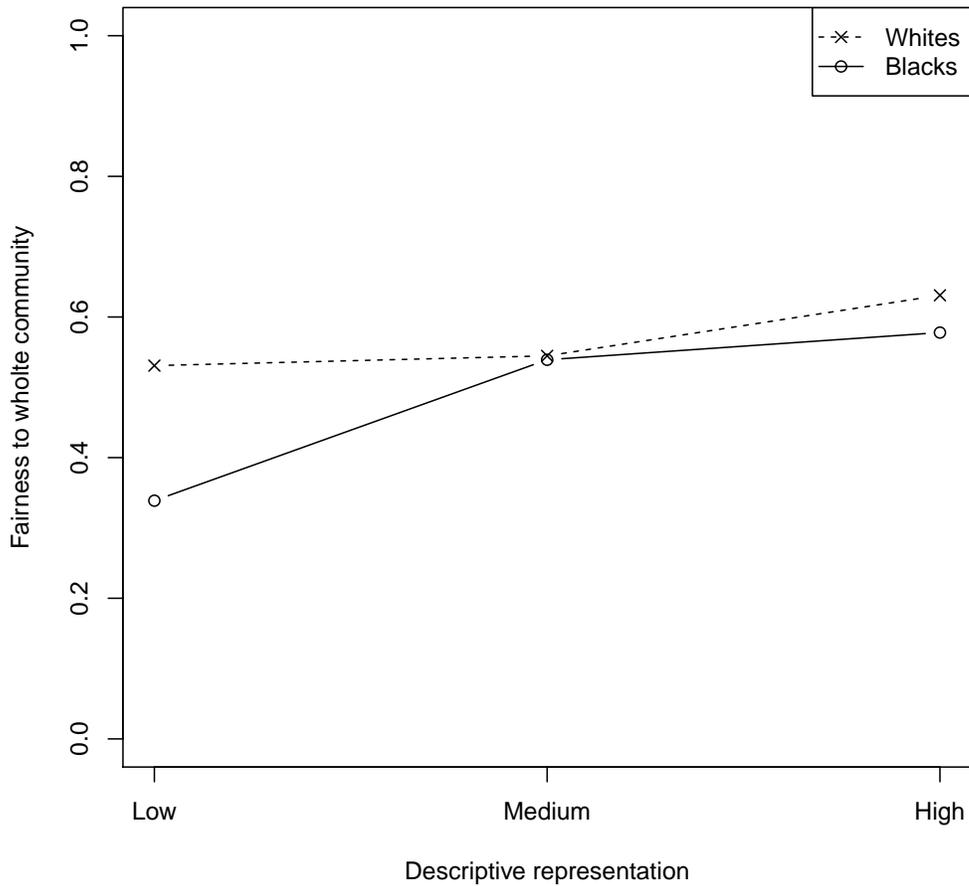


Figure 3.2: Perceived fairness to the whole community

lower perceptions of fairness, regardless of treatment category (see Figure 3.3). At low levels of descriptive representation, blacks are about 0.15 points lower in perceived fairness than are whites. This gap is about 0.13 at mid levels of descriptive representation, and about 0.05 at high levels of descriptive representation.

The third and final set of results from Table 3.2 displays the effect of descriptive representation on how satisfied subjects were with the racial composition of the decision-making body. Unlike the previous two dependent variables, which included no overt references to the racial composition of the

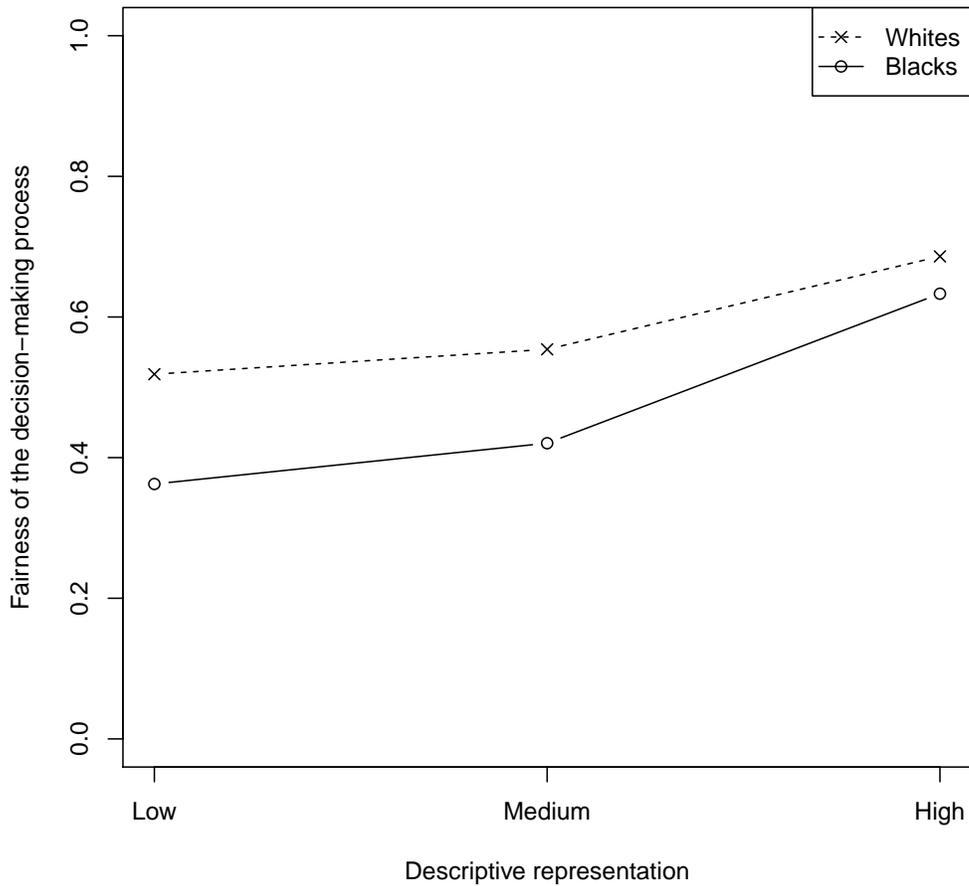


Figure 3.3: Perceived fairness of the decision-making process

body, this dependent variable cues subjects to think about issues of descriptive representation when reporting their satisfaction.

Just as with measures tapping subjects' evaluations of the fairness of the decision-making to all members of the community and the fairness of the process itself, levels of descriptive representation have strong direct effects on both whites' and blacks' levels of satisfaction. As Figure 3.4 shows, At low levels of descriptive representation, satisfaction with the composition of the decision-making body was about 0.51 and 0.33 for whites and blacks, respectively. Higher levels of descriptive representation increased satisfaction with

the body monotonically such that at high levels of descriptive representation satisfaction was about 0.62 and 0.49 for whites and blacks.

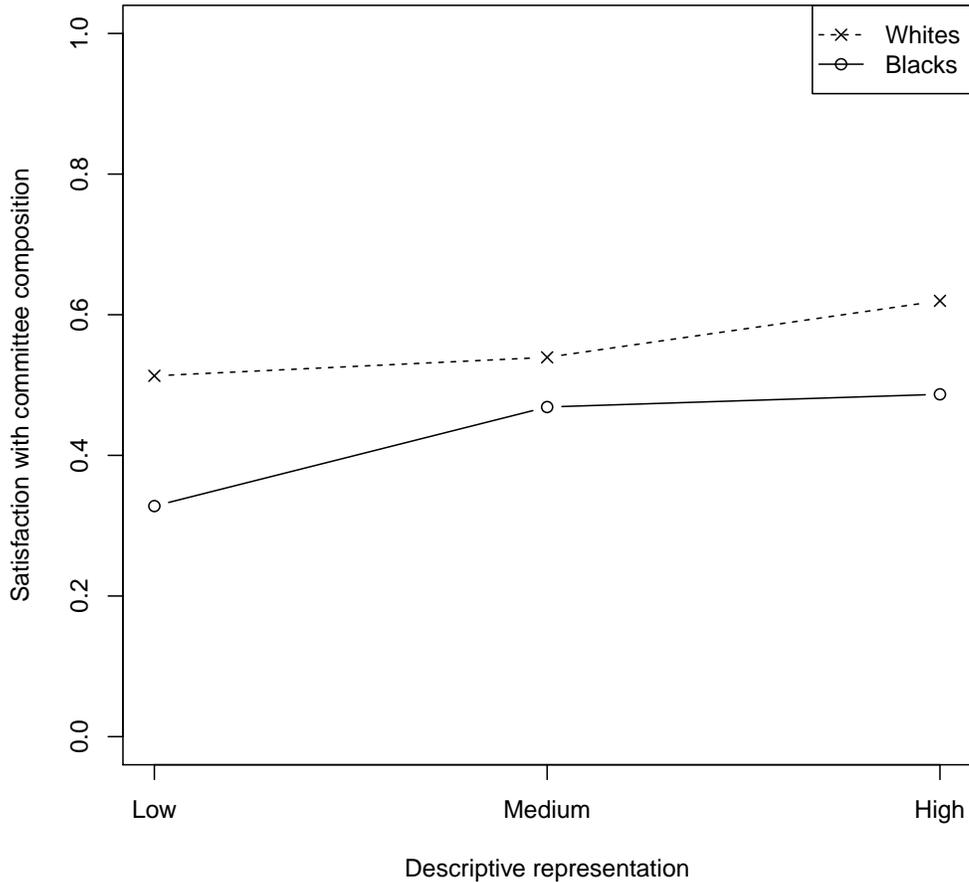


Figure 3.4: Satisfaction with the committee composition

Overall, these findings point to a strong direct effect of descriptive representation. Across all three dependent variables, descriptive representation yielded higher evaluations of the fairness of the process, the fairness of the decision-making to all members of the community, and increased satisfaction with the racial composition of the committee.

These findings corroborate the longstanding argument in the literature on race and politics that descriptive representation is consequential. From these

experimental results, we should indeed expect higher evaluations of government decision-making as descriptive representation increases. Moreover, this boost to satisfaction and evaluations of fairness does not just affect minority group members. Members of the majority also appear to benefit from higher levels of descriptive representation. This raises interesting questions for why we tend to see lower political engagement among whites who are represented by a minority. However, satisfaction and perceptions of fairness do not necessarily equate to behavioral differences, such as increased turnout or knowledge. Further research is needed to determine whether the effects found in this experiment might translate into positive (or negative) behavioral changes.

One curious result of these findings is the overall level of satisfaction expressed by blacks. For the final dependent variable, satisfaction with the racial composition of the committee, under no treatment condition did blacks express overall satisfaction. The highest level of black satisfaction, under the condition where blacks were 50% of the committee, was 0.49 — slightly lower than the halfway mark of 0.5. So for this dependent variable, under no circumstances are blacks on balance more satisfied than they are dissatisfied with the composition of the committee.

In a similar vein, blacks were only above the halfway mark on perceived fairness of the decision-making process when descriptive representation was 50%. When descriptive representation was 15% or lower, blacks were on balance dissatisfied with the decision-making process. Evaluations of fairness to the whole community fared somewhat better. So long as descriptive representation was not the lowest category, blacks were on balance satisfied with the process. However, in all circumstances black satisfaction seems to lag behind that of whites.

This raises an interesting dilemma about trying to increase blacks' satisfaction with government processes. Reaching the high levels of descriptive representation necessary to push blacks above 50% satisfaction might be impossible in the real world. It might require representational parity to accomplish this feat (if we focus on the results of the third dependent variable), which would require drastic changes to the composition of decision-making bodies, from Congress down to City Hall. Even with the most optimistic dependent variable, black satisfaction with decision-making process is only barely above 50% when the composition is roughly proportional to blacks' numerical status in the nation at-large. Thus, assumptions that we should push for proportional descriptive representation (from sources as diverse as Guinier (1995) and Mansbridge (1999)) might not accomplish much in terms of boosting satisfaction with government.

This still leaves us with two important questions. First, why is it that blacks tend to perceive the process as less fair, regardless of the racial composition of the decision-making body? Second, and perhaps more interesting, why is it that the levels of descriptive representation needed to satisfy blacks seems so high? Why might proportional representation be enough to boost black satisfaction to levels near that of whites? I explore this latter question in greater detail in Chapter 5.

3.3.2 Effects of substantive representation

The results for descriptive representation indicate that both whites and blacks are indeed responsive to the effects of differing levels of that aspect of representation. But what role does the actual substantive outcome of decision-making have on perceptions of fairness and satisfaction with the

decision-making process? Do we see the same persistent deficit in satisfaction for blacks in comparison to whites? Or do favorable substantive outcomes trump the lower perceptions that seem endemic to blacks in this experiment?

The effects of substantive representation are summarized in Table 3.3. Each column corresponds with one of the three dependent variables employed in the experiment. As with descriptive representation, the direct effect of the experimental manipulation is consistent and in the expected direction.

Both blacks and whites rated the decision more negatively when the outcome favored whites than when it favored blacks. This effect is roughly the same size across all three dependent variables. In addition, blacks reacted more negatively to outcomes favoring whites. The size of this interaction between race and treatment condition varied across the three dependent variables, but the difference is statistically different from zero in all three cases.

3.3.3 Satisfaction and substantive representation

Table 3.3: Independent effects of substantive representation

Variable	Community		Process		Composition	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.59	0.02	0.60	0.02	0.57	0.02
Favored Whites	-0.07	0.02	-0.09	0.02	-0.05	0.02
Black	0.03	0.04	-0.03	0.05	0.00	0.05
Black*Favored Whites	-0.19	0.06	-0.13	0.06	-0.24	0.07
Female	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.00	0.02
PartyID	-0.05	0.04	-0.04	0.04	-0.11	0.04
Ideology	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01

To get a sense of racial differences in response to treatment, Figure 3.5 shows the effect of treatment on evaluations of fairness of the decision to all members of the community. When the outcome favored whites, whites were

only slightly favorable in their ratings, on balance (0.53 on the 0 to 1 scale). blacks, on the other hand, expressed very negative evaluations of the decision when it favored whites. The predicted rating of fairness for a black where the substantive outcome was unfavorable is only 0.37 (when all else is held at its median value).

This represents a high level of dissatisfaction with the decision-making process, and also a substantial gap between the perceptions of whites and blacks. This is not altogether unsurprising; when outcomes do not favor one's preferred policy, we can only expect satisfaction to go down.

What is interesting is that when the substantive outcome favored blacks, white and black subjects were virtually identical in their evaluations of the fairness of the decision to the whole community (0.60 and 0.62 for whites and blacks respectively). If the only thing in operation were simple group interest, then we should expect whites in the "Favored blacks" treatment to appear similar to blacks in the "Favored whites" treatment. But this is simply not the case. Both whites and blacks express relatively high perceptions of fairness when the outcome favors blacks. If anything, white perceptions of fairness are higher when the outcome favors blacks over whites.

If we turn to either of the other two dependent variables, we see much the same story. Figure 3.6 shows predicted outcome by race for perceptions of fairness of the process, and Figure 3.7 shows the predicted outcome by race for satisfaction with the group composition.

In both of these cases, like in the case of fairness to all members of the community, the evaluations of blacks are much lower when the substantive outcome favors whites. This is in keeping with the argument of linked fate — when the outcome is unfavorable to blacks in general, individual blacks should also be opposed to the outcome (regardless of if it has a direct negative

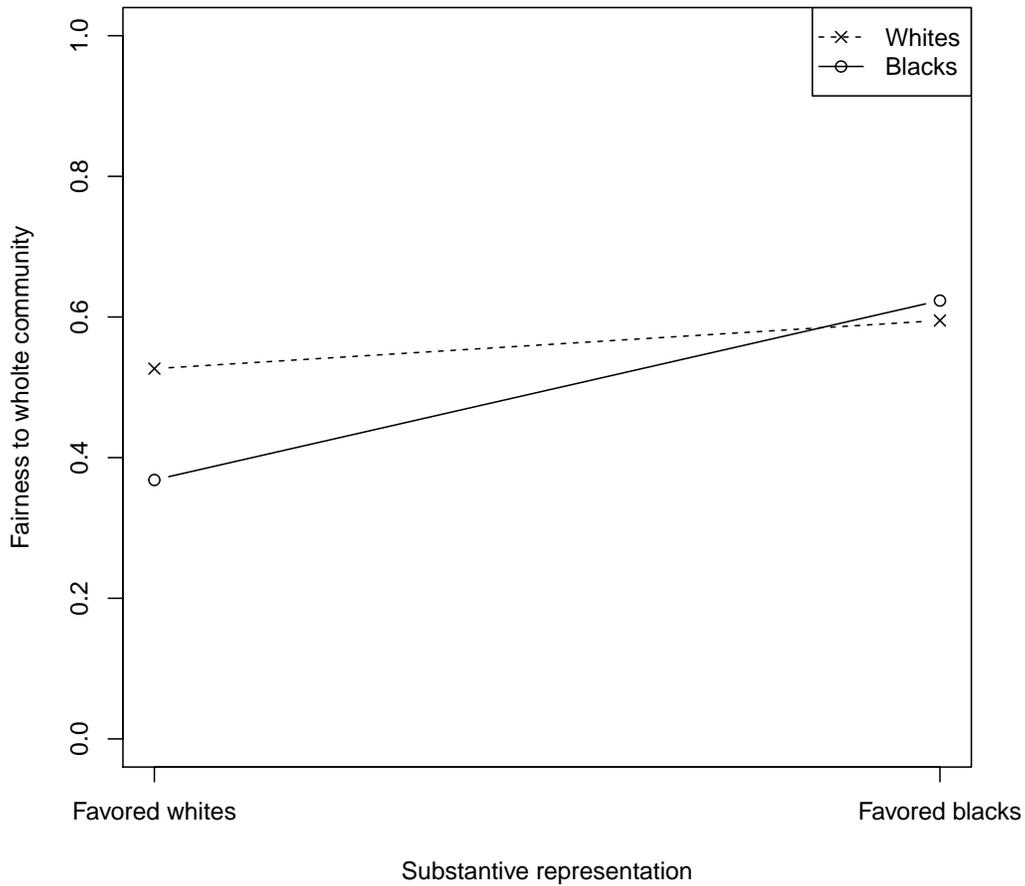


Figure 3.5: Perceived fairness to the whole community

effect on them).

However, when the outcome favors blacks, both whites and blacks express more positive evaluations of the decision-making body and process. In both cases, having an outcome that favored their racial in-group led blacks to hold opinions as favorable as whites'. And in both of these cases, going from an unfavorable to a favorable outcome improved blacks' ratings of the decision-making from dismal (0.37 for fairness of the process, 0.29 for satisfaction with the composition) to generally positive (0.59 for fairness of the process and 0.58 for satisfaction with the composition).

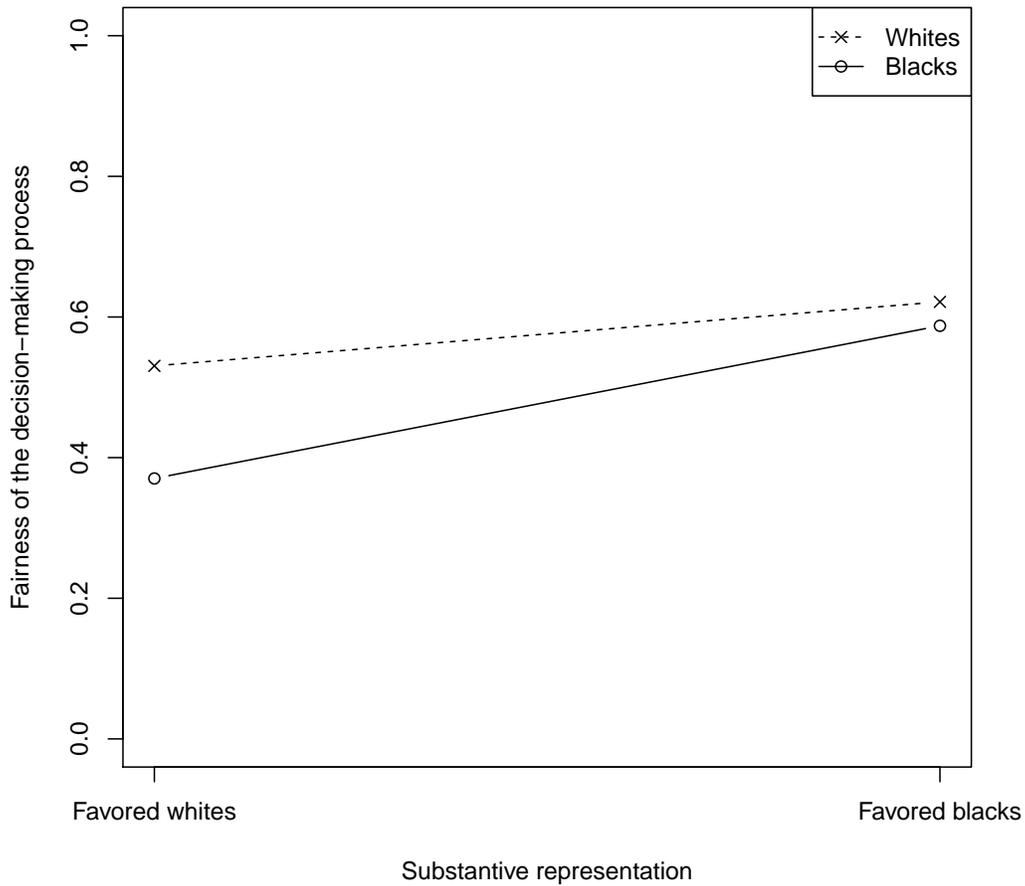


Figure 3.6: Perceived fairness of the decision-making process

As with the first dependent variable, whites’ evaluations of the process do not degrade when that process favors blacks. Instead, there is a slight improvement in evaluations when the process favors blacks. This could be due in part to the low saliency of the in-group to white subjects. The result is exactly what we would expect if whites’ policy attitudes are unaffected by whether the policy is beneficial for whites in general or not.

In addition, this could help explain the positive effect for ideology. As reported in Table 3.3, conservatives tend to be more positive toward the process across all three dependent variables. Moreover, when we include

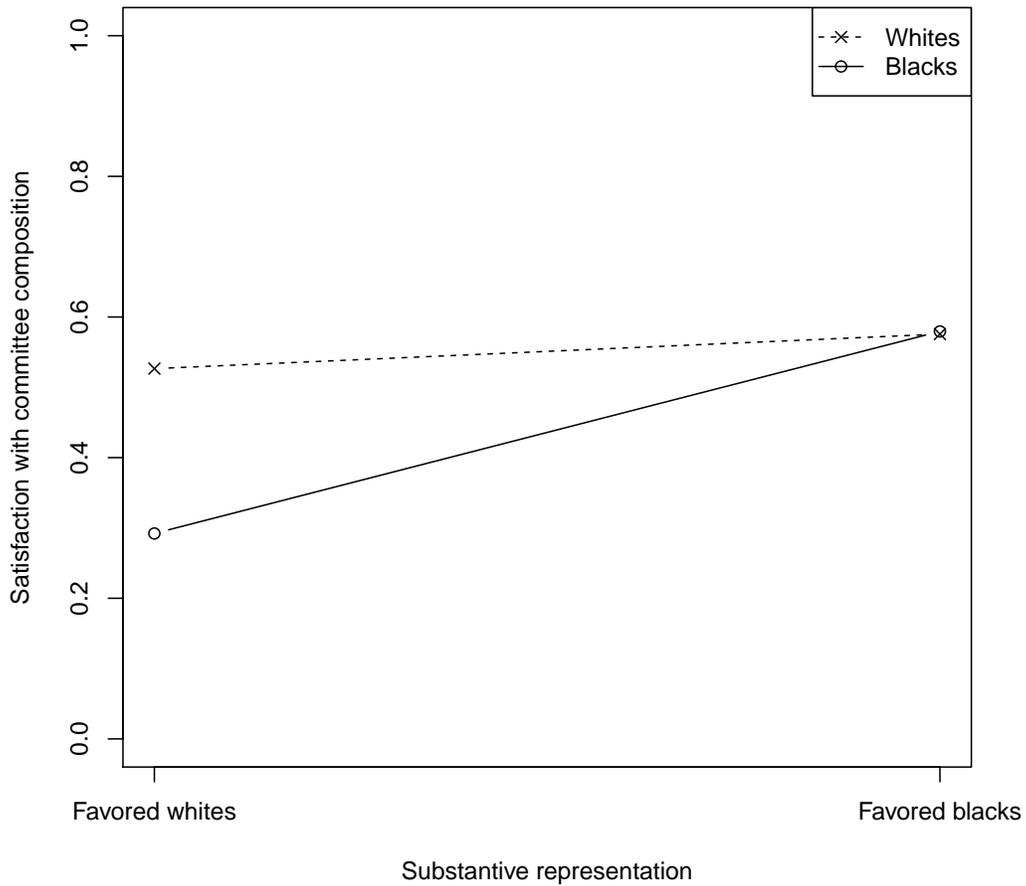


Figure 3.7: Satisfaction with the committee composition

an interaction term between ideology and treatment condition, we find a strong positive direct effect of treatment such that whites are, on average, more positive when the outcome favors blacks. However, this relationship is attenuated for conservatives.¹²

¹²See Appendix for full results.

3.4 Representation and maximizing satisfaction across groups

The results above paint a remarkably rosy picture of how we might go about increasing satisfaction with government outcomes for both the majority and the minority. For both groups, higher levels of descriptive representation of blacks actually increased satisfaction. This suggests that, at least under the conditions described in the experiment, members of the majority are willing to cede substantial amounts of their own descriptive representation to members of the minority.

This should be taken as encouraging to those who seek to boost minority descriptive representation in governance. An empirical concern first raised by Gay (2001) has been that boosting minority descriptive representation will have deleterious effects on members of the majority. If the results of this experiment are to be believed, this is not necessarily the case.

However, caution should be used when trying to draw inferences from the representation described in this experiment to representation more generally. The decision process used in the experiment focused on a (at least nominally) nonpartisan issue — school placement. It is difficult to say how the effects found here might differ if the decision were more overtly partisan. For example, we might not expect all whites to be equally accommodating if the decision was about redistributive policies or affirmative action.

In addition to being nominally nonpartisan, this experiment also seems to have described a situation in which there is something of a consensus on what the “right” policy decision should have been. For both blacks and whites, an outcome favoring blacks appears to be the preferred policy. This outcome receives significantly higher ratings from blacks, and although the

difference is small, this outcome receives slightly higher ratings from whites. This suggests that among both groups (or at least among a substantial subset of both groups), the fairest policy outcome was one that favored blacks.

As has already been stated, the primary dilemma with regards to minority substantive representation arises whenever minority and majority interests are in opposition. The vignettes used in the present experiment do not seem to capture such a situation. As a result, it is unclear how far we can generalize the results of this experiment to situations involving more adversarial majority and minority positions.

CHAPTER 4

TRADEOFFS BETWEEN DESCRIPTIVE AND SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION

4.1 The need for tradeoffs

Chapter 3 demonstrated that descriptive and substantive representation had direct effects of the perceived fairness of decision-making processes and satisfaction with government. Blacks who were in the high descriptive representation condition exhibited the highest ratings of fairness and satisfaction. Blacks who were in the favors blacks substantive condition also exhibited higher ratings of fairness and satisfaction.

But as was pointed out in Chapters 1 and 2, members of permanent minority groups often do not have the luxury of having both high descriptive representation and favorable substantive outcomes. Instead, they are often forced to make tradeoffs between the two aspects of representation. High levels of descriptive representation are certainly possible, especially via creative redistricting. However, as Cameron, Epstein and O'Halloran (1996) points out, this may actually decrease their substantive representation.

For that reason, it is important to know whether blacks are willing to trade off one aspect of representation for another when directly confronted with such a choice. Can high descriptive representation compensate for failing to obtain favorable policy outcomes? Or does receiving one's preferred policy render other forms of representation moot? Or, most challenging, does satisfaction require some combination of both high descriptive representation

and favorable substantive outcomes?

It is also important to know how whites would respond to these combinations of descriptive and substantive representation. If high descriptive representation does compensate for low substantive representation for blacks, are whites willing to accept this higher level of black descriptive representation? Or does any increase in black representation trigger negative reactions from whites?

4.2 Are minority group members willing to make tradeoffs

To get a first look at whether minority group members are willing to make tradeoffs between aspects of representation (and whether whites are willing to accept these combinations), we can compare the mean levels of perceived fairness and satisfaction across the three dependent variables. Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 below display those mean levels. The solid line approximates the relationship between descriptive representation and blacks' perceived fairness/satisfaction when the substantive outcome favors blacks. The dashed line approximates the relationship between descriptive representation and blacks' perceived fairness/satisfaction when the outcome favors whites. Each point represents the group mean for that treatment condition. The bars are the 90% confidence interval for the group mean, as determined by a t-test.¹

The hypothesis for these dependent variables is stated in Hypotheses 2 and 3. The expectation from these hypotheses is that we should see a gap between the lines when descriptive representation is low, and no gap when descriptive

¹These results were verified using bootstrapped confidence intervals. However, due to the sparseness of data on black subjects (there are fewer than 10 black subjects in some of the treatment conditions), bootstrapping is generally less reliable than a simple t-test.

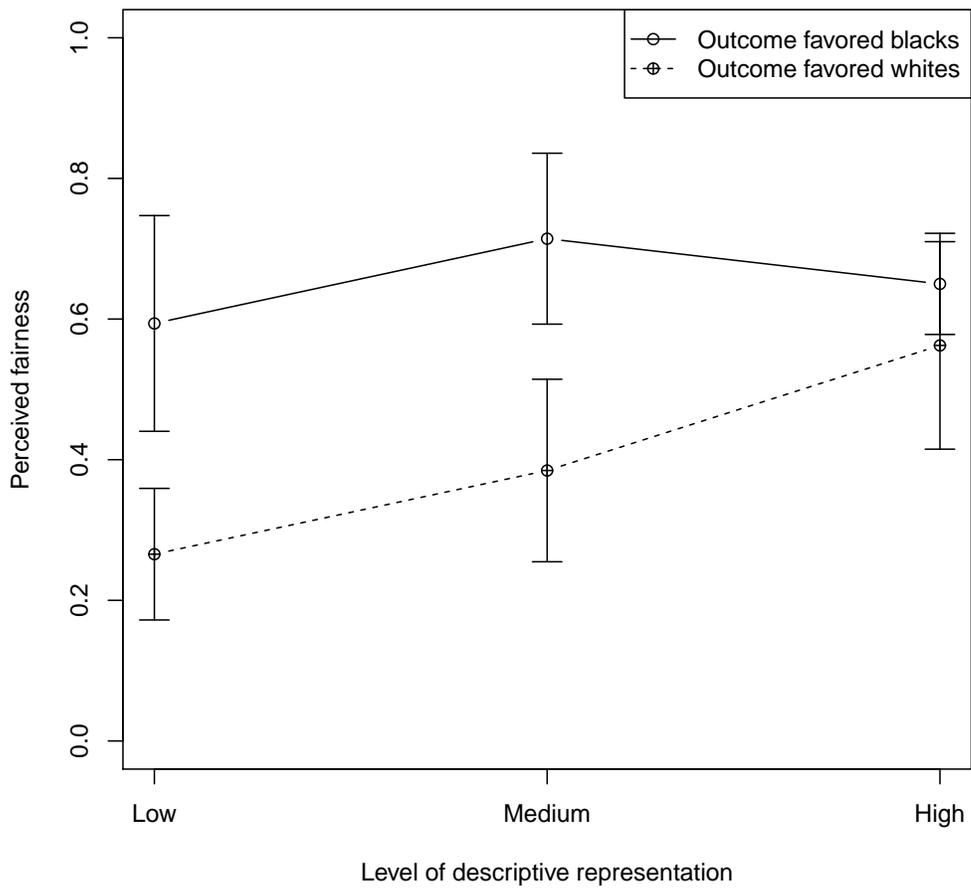


Figure 4.1: Fairness to whole community, black subjects

representation is high. This would indicate that high levels of descriptive representation can offset blacks' dissatisfaction when the substantive outcome is unfavorable.

Figure 4.1 shows these group means for the first dependent variable, perceived fairness of the decision-making to the whole community. The story told by the group means is exactly what the hypotheses suggest: when descriptive representation is low, the average perceived fairness to the whole community is largely dependent on whether the outcome is favorable or unfavorable to blacks. When it is unfavorable, the average rating was less than 0.30. But when the outcome is favorable, average ratings are statistically significantly higher (near 0.60).

When descriptive representation is medium, evaluations of fairness increase for both substantive outcomes. However, this increase is small, and the 90% confidence interval for each group mean includes the group means when descriptive representation is low. More importantly, though, the fairness gap between outcomes favoring blacks and favoring whites remains essentially unchanged.

A very different picture emerges when descriptive representation is high (i.e., at parity). At the highest level of descriptive representation, there is very little difference in perceived fairness between outcomes that favor whites and favor blacks. Outcomes that favor whites yield mean fairness perceptions of 0.56, and outcomes that favor blacks yield mean fairness perceptions of 0.65 (the mean for outcomes that favor blacks is within the 90% confidence interval for outcomes that favor whites).

Moreover, when descriptive representation reaches this high level, African Americans' average perception of fairness is above 50%, regardless of substantive outcome. This means that, on balance, blacks are favorable in their

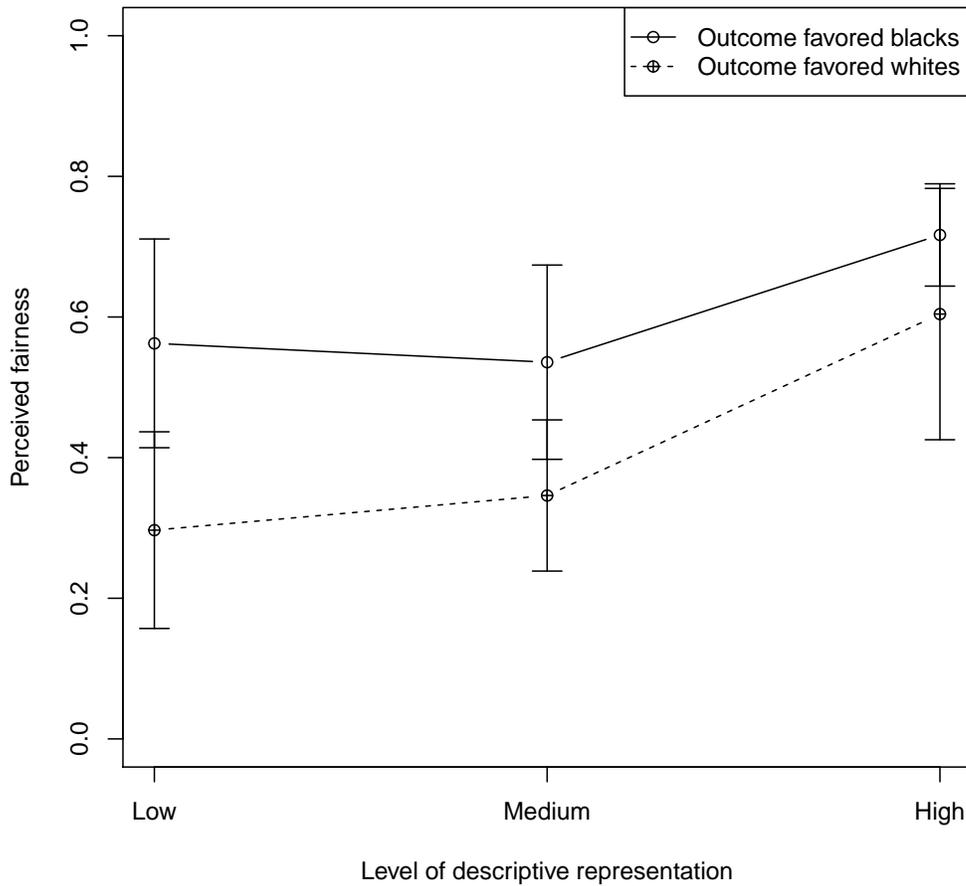


Figure 4.2: Fairness of the process, black subjects

evaluation of the decision-making process when there is parity in descriptive representation. At this high level of descriptive representation, it seems to matter little whether the outcome is favorable or not. In terms of designing institutions to maximize satisfaction, this suggests that ensuring a high amount of descriptive representation might succeed without having to compromise the policy preferences of the majority. This is in line with the expectations of Hypotheses 2 and 3.

There is a similar, but less clear picture with regard to the second dependent variable. In the case of evaluation of the fairness of the decision-making

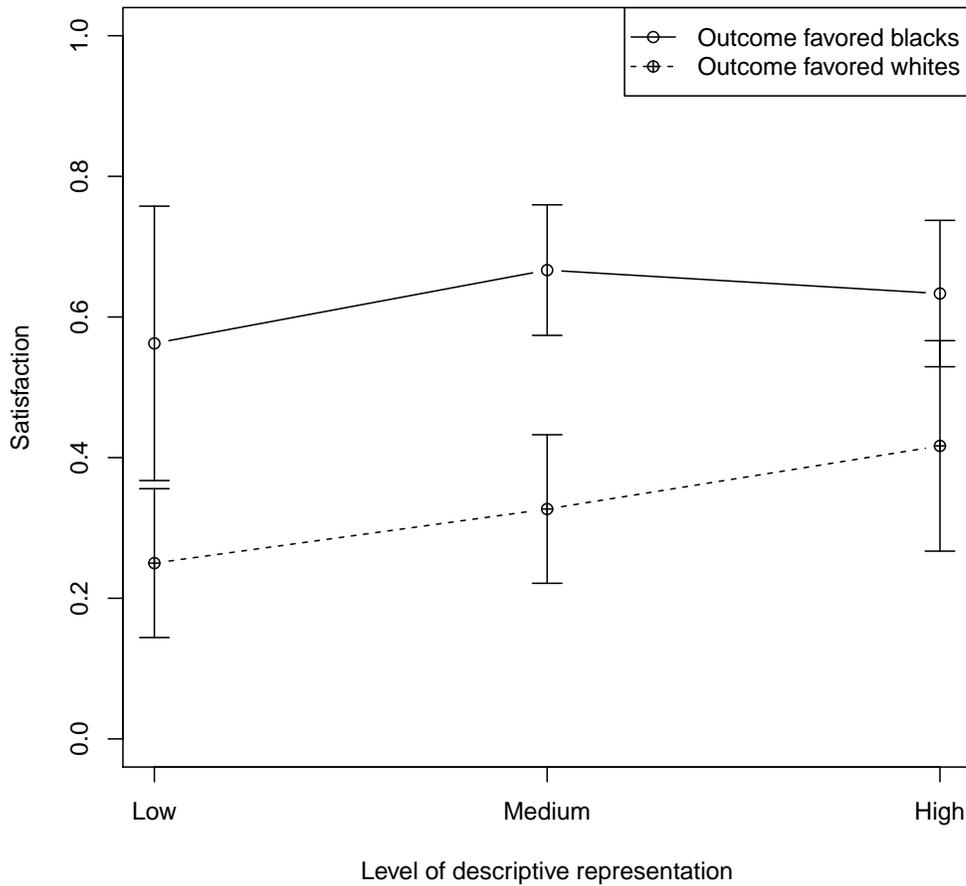


Figure 4.3: Satisfaction with the composition, black subjects

process itself, high levels of descriptive representation are linked with higher evaluations, regardless of the substantive outcome. In addition, the gap between fairness evaluations when the outcome favors whites versus blacks is smaller when descriptive representation is high than when descriptive representation is low or medium (0.11 for high versus 0.27 for low and 0.19 for medium). But in this case, the mean evaluations of fairness between substantive outcomes are not significantly different at any level of descriptive representation.

The story that emerges with the third dependent variable is consistent

with the findings for the first two dependent variables. As in the case of perceived fairness to the whole community, descriptive representation seems to compensate for a lack of substantive representation. Although there remains a satisfaction gap between outcomes that favor whites and outcomes that favor blacks even when descriptive representation is at its highest level, the size of that gap is smaller than at lower levels of descriptive representation.

4.2.1 Are majority group members willing to make tradeoffs

Whether or not minorities are willing to make tradeoffs between aspects of representation could be a moot point. Members of the majority might tend to reject any increase in the substantive or descriptive representation of minorities, especially when that descriptive representation is far higher than their population proportion. If that is the case, then it is unlikely that any policy interventions aimed at boosting minority turnout would succeed. Even were such an intervention to be successfully employed, members of the majority might react negatively to such an effort, perhaps by disengaging from politics or losing trust in government (Gay, 2001; Ulbig, 2005).

But the results from Chapter 3 suggest that this might not be the case. All of the direct effects of increasing black representation had positive or null effects on whites' evaluations of the fairness to the entire community, fairness of the process, and satisfaction with the committee composition.

It is thus worth examining the mean evaluations of fairness/satisfaction in each of the three outcome measures for whites. The results of each of these group means is presented in Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6. In addition to having positive independent effects on evaluations of fairness, the joint effects of substantive and descriptive representation appear to be positive as

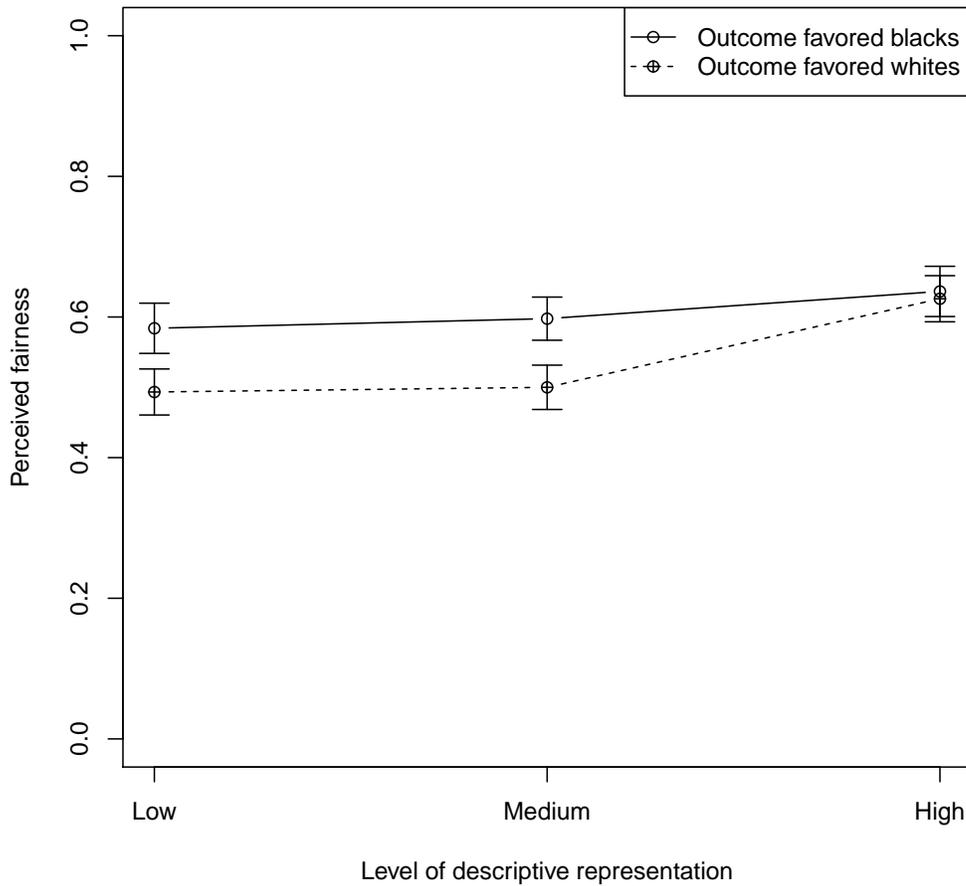


Figure 4.4: Fairness to the whole community, white subjects

well.

For evaluations of fairness to the whole community, substantive outcomes that favor blacks are perceived as more fair than substantive outcomes that favor whites. However, when descriptive representation is at its highest level, the difference in fairness perceptions across substantive outcomes is negligible. Interesting is that there is seemingly no effect of going from low to medium descriptive representation for whites; in both cases fairness remains essentially unchanged, and outcomes favoring whites lag below those favoring blacks.

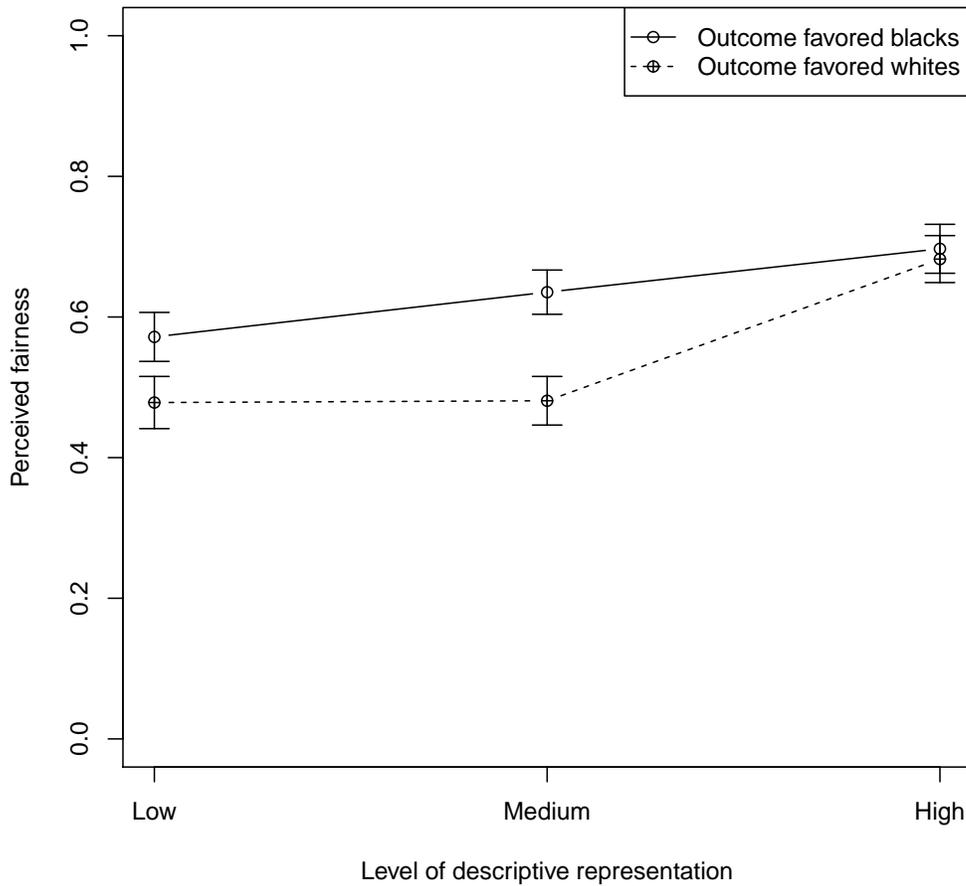


Figure 4.5: Fairness of the process, white subjects

The story is almost exactly the same with regards to perceptions of the fairness of the process itself. When the outcome reached favored blacks, perceptions of process fairness were higher at all levels of descriptive representation. But when descriptive representation was at its highest level, this difference was negligible.

Whites' satisfaction with the composition of the committee was affected in a similar way as their perceptions of fairness. Unlike fairness perceptions, however, the effect of substantive outcome mattered very little for whites. Although whites expressed greater satisfaction with the committee compo-

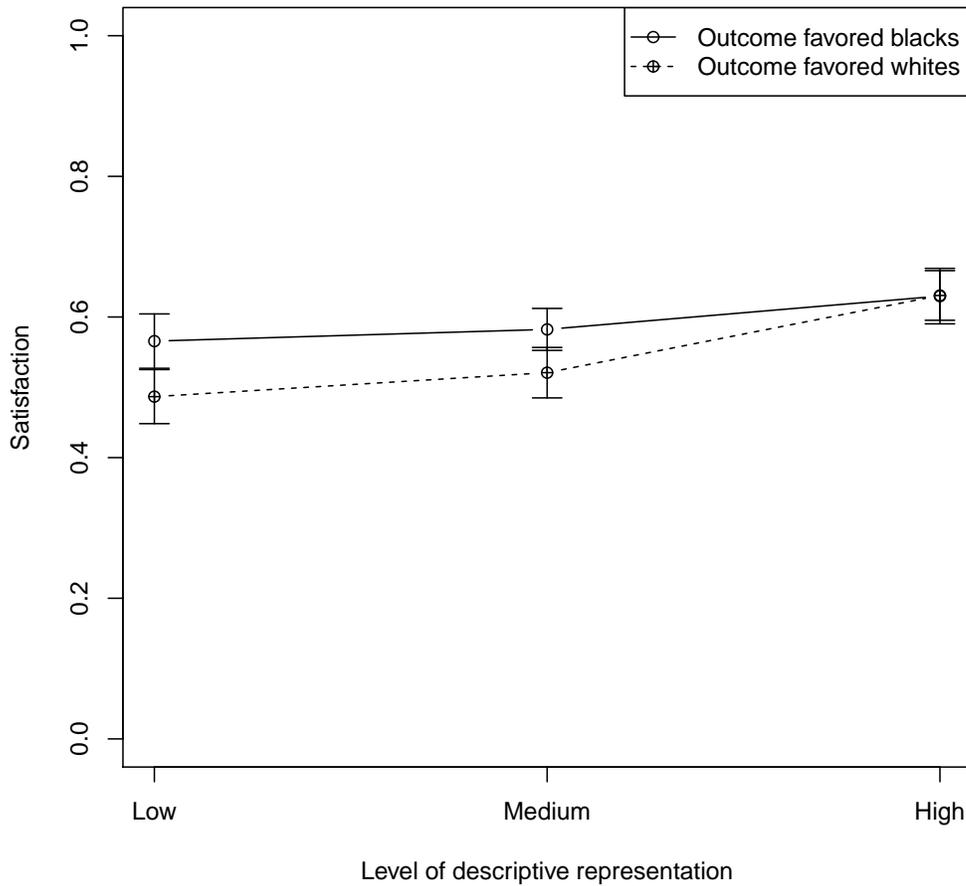


Figure 4.6: Satisfaction with the composition, white subjects

sition when the outcome favored blacks, this difference was extremely small. But as in the case of the previous two outcome measures, when descriptive representation is high, whites are essentially indifferent between substantive outcomes.

4.3 Multivariate analyses

Because the story appears so similar between whites and blacks, I include both groups for the multivariate analyses presented below. To determine

Table 4.1: Interactions between descriptive and substantive representation

Variable	Community		Process		Composition	
	Coef.	Std. Error	Coef.	Std. Error	Coef.	Std. Error
Intercept	0.63	0.02	0.68	0.03	0.62	0.03
Low descriptive	-0.06	0.03	-0.13	0.03	-0.07	0.03
Med Descriptive	-0.03	0.03	-0.08	0.03	-0.05	0.03
Favors whites	-0.02	0.03	-0.03	0.03	-0.03	0.03
Low*Favors whites	-0.08	0.04	-0.07	0.04	-0.05	0.04
Med*Favors whites	-0.09	0.04	-0.13	0.04	-0.04	0.04
Black	-0.07	0.03	-0.11	0.03	-0.12	0.03
Female	-0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.00	0.02
Ideology	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.01
PartyID	-0.06	0.04	-0.05	0.04	-0.12	0.04

if citizens are willing to make tradeoffs between aspects of representation, we can interact the two aspects of representation. The expectation from Hypotheses 2 and 3, and the relationship displayed when looking simply at group means, is that descriptive representation should compensate for substantive outcomes that favor whites. That is, we should expect to see more positive values as descriptive representation increases, and that this positive effect will overpower any negative effect of substantive outcome.

The results of an interaction model between descriptive and substantive representation are displayed in Table 4.1. The main effects of each treatment condition are consistent with the group-based means across all three outcome variables. For descriptive representation, having low or medium levels of representation is associated with lower perceptions of fairness and satisfaction with the composition. Substantive outcomes that favor whites are associated with lower ratings of fairness and satisfaction.

The interactions between having low or medium descriptive representation and an outcome that favors whites are negative as well. This suggests that when outcomes favor whites or there are fewer blacks on the decision-making body, the representation is seen as less fair and less satisfactory. When the

outcome favors whites *and* there are fewer blacks on the decision-making body, this negative effect is compounded.

Two other direct effects warrant mentioning. In this model, blacks tend to report lower satisfaction and perceived fairness across all treatment conditions. This is somewhat troubling, but not inconsistent with what the literature would lead us to believe (see Aberbach and Walker, 1970; Schuman and Gruenberg, 1972; DeHoog, Lowery and Lyons, 1990). In addition, there is a consistent positive, albeit small, effect for ideology such that conservatives tend to have higher ratings of fairness and satisfaction across all treatment conditions.

Because interpreting interaction terms quickly becomes difficult, Figures 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 display predicted levels of fairness and satisfaction given treatment condition, with all other values held at their median. Note that these figures represent estimates drawn from the entire sample, including both blacks and whites. Because whites are the modal category, fitted values for whites are displayed.²

4.4 Implications for representation

What are we to make of these analyses? The results for blacks support Hypotheses 2 and 3. But the results for whites are unexpected. Whites actually appear to be positively affected by high levels of black descriptive representation, which was not anticipated by Hypothesis 4.

²The fitted values for blacks from this model would be identical to whites', except shifted downward by 0.07, 0.11, and 0.12 for each of the three outcome measures. We could also fit a model where we interact race with treatment conditions. However, this model did not yield a significant interaction between race and treatment condition. This is what we would expect given the group-mean results. Although their baseline levels of satisfaction and perceived fairness differ, the effect of treatment appears to be the same for both blacks and whites.

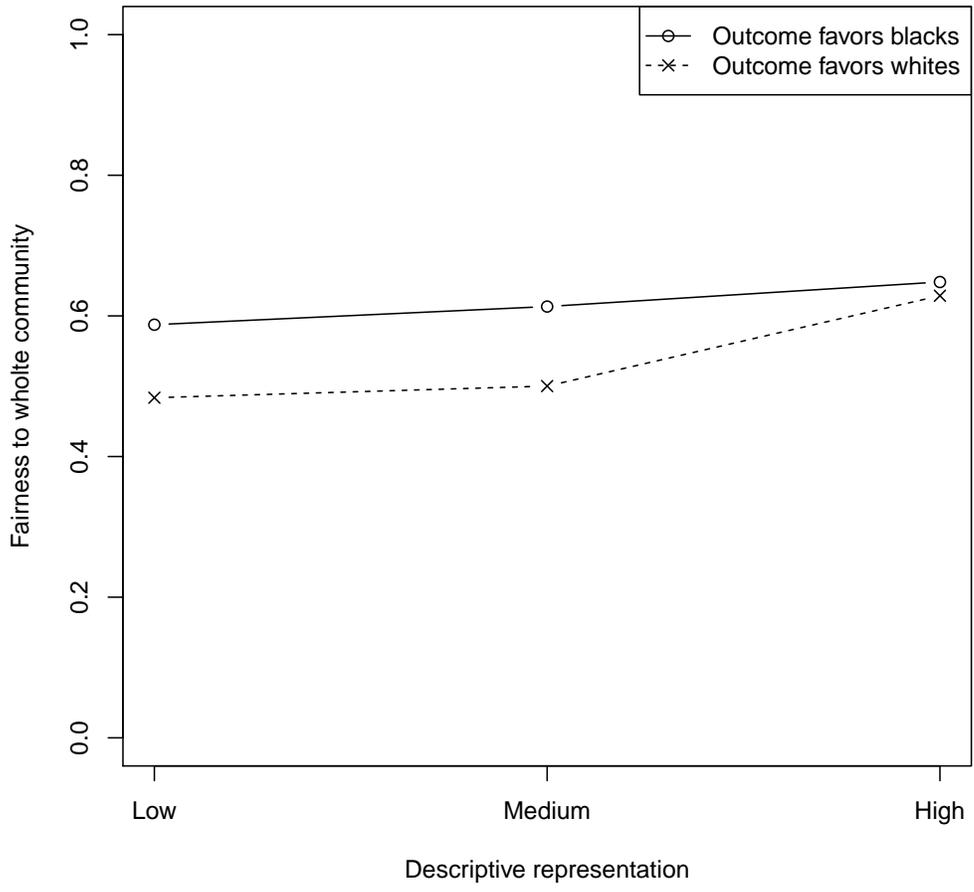


Figure 4.7: Fairness to the whole community by substantive and descriptive representation

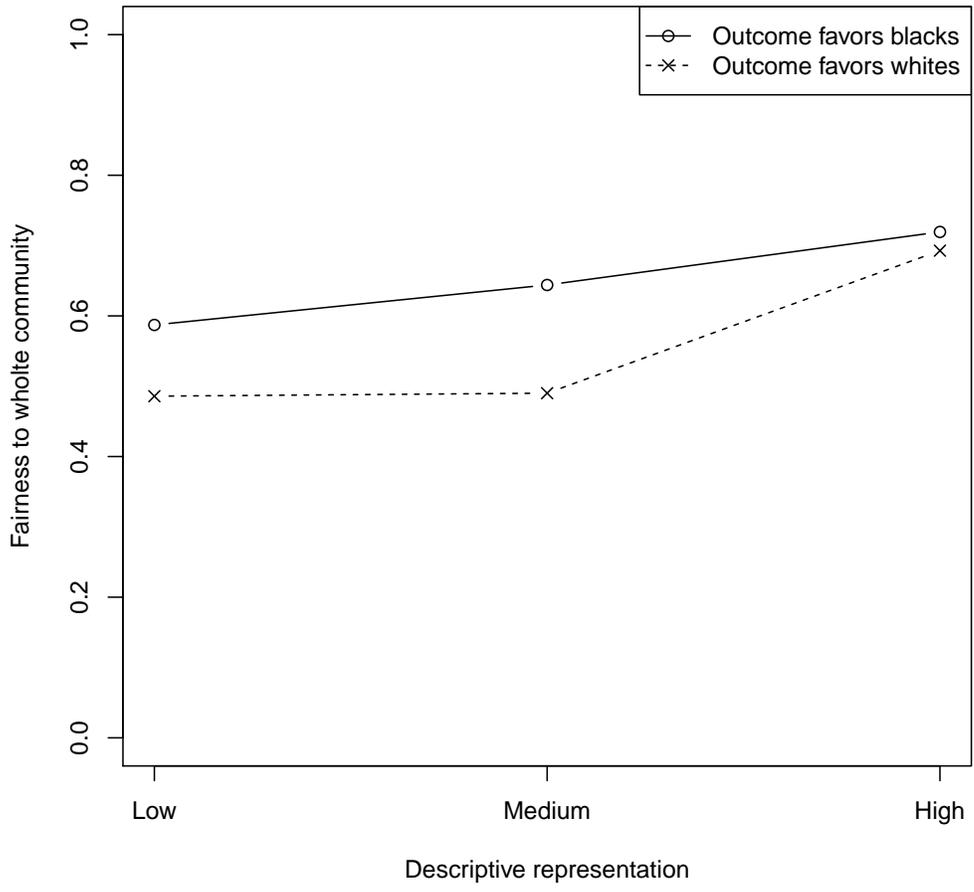


Figure 4.8: Fairness of the process by substantive and descriptive representation

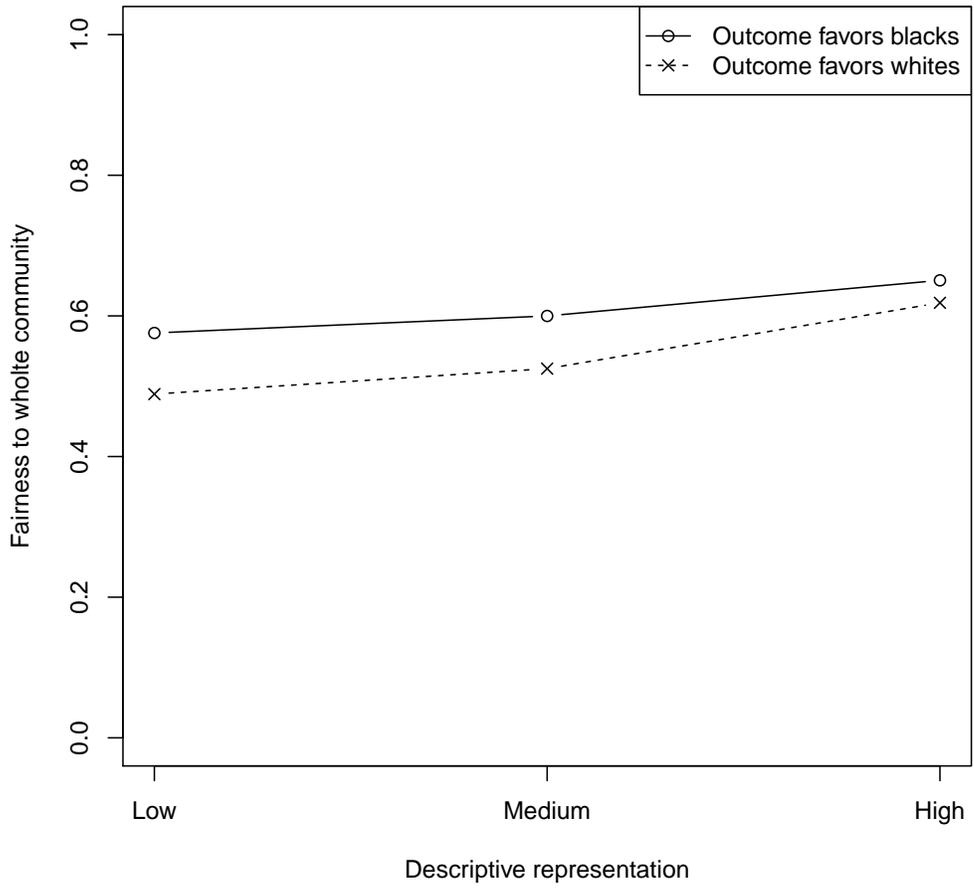


Figure 4.9: Satisfaction with the composition by substantive and descriptive representation

As has been discussed before, one limitation of this research design is that there appears to be substantial consensus on which substantive outcome was more fair. This is likely not to be the case in a number of issue domains. So we should use caution in interpreting the effects of substantive representation.

But the effects of descriptive representation could not be clearer. For both whites and blacks, high levels of descriptive representation seem to nullify any negative effect introduced by a substantive outcome. In other words, when descriptive representation is high, blacks and whites are willing to view the representational process as fair, even if the decision did not go their way.³

4.5 Tradeoffs and the prospect for maximizing satisfaction across groups

These results indicate that minorities are indeed willing to make tradeoffs about representation. Although the highest ratings of fairness and satisfaction were obtained when there was a combination of substantive and descriptive representation (as expected by Hypothesis 1), descriptive representation did seem to have a compensatory effect. When descriptive representation is high, blacks appear nearly indifferent to substantive outcome.

What this suggests is that having a voice may be very important for evaluations of fairness, satisfaction, and legitimacy. Simply providing blacks with an equal voice at the table appears to nullify any effects of losing a policy fight. Blacks maintained high ratings of fairness and satisfaction even when it was decided to build the school in the white neighborhood, so long as black

³An interesting point here is what would constitute substantive representation for whites. A decision that favors the white neighborhood would appear *prima facie* to be the substantively favorable outcome for whites. However, their higher ratings for decisions favoring the black neighborhood might indicate that this may not be the case. I will return to this point in Chapter 6.

representation was on par with white.

Even more interesting are the ratings of whites in these situations. Whites seem perfectly willing to accept high levels of black descriptive representation (regardless of substantive outcome). As a result, designers of institutions might be able to garner support from the minority for policies designed to boost minority descriptive representation.

In this way, institutions might be able to increase satisfaction with government without treading on principles of majority rule. If having an equal voice at the decision-making process is sufficient to guarantee high levels of perceived fairness and satisfaction on the part of minorities, then institutions that allow for greater minority participation might be effective at boosting satisfaction. Even if this increased participation was not linked to direct policy outputs (as might be the case in citizen juries or other deliberative bodies), we might still see a boost to satisfaction among members of a group that historically has tended to be disenfranchised, disengaged, and distrustful.

CHAPTER 5

PERCEPTIONS OF RACE AND REPRESENTATION: THE PROBLEM OF INNUMERACY

Thus far, the experiment has shown strong support for the premise that citizens have representation preferences, and that they are willing to make tradeoffs between descriptive and substantive representation. However, these results have raised a few important questions, and there is a hitherto unstated complication of the experimental treatment itself.

One of the questions raised by the results reported in Chapters 3 and 4 is this: How much descriptive representation is sufficient for blacks to be satisfied with decision-making, regardless of the outcome? From the results presented in Chapter 4, it would appear that the level of descriptive representation needed is extremely high. When levels of collective descriptive representation are proportional to the national population (15% in the experiment, 13% in the national population), blacks' satisfaction and evaluations of fairness are dependent upon the substantive outcome; when the outcome favors whites, blacks tend to be dissatisfied and view the process as unfair. We might therefore conclude that even when representation is proportional, blacks' representation preference is still for substantive over descriptive representation. This raises doubts about calls for boosting descriptive representation to levels commensurate with population proportions (such as Mansbridge, 1999; Guinier, 1995).

But the question is why is the threshold for descriptive representation so high? Why do blacks (and to a lesser extent, whites) desire there to be

roughly equal numbers of blacks and whites in decision-making bodies, when the two racial groups are not close to parity in terms of total population? It could be that citizens actually want all interested groups to have an equal say in decision-making. But this raises serious questions about the ability of normal government bodies to satisfy the representation preferences of ordinary citizens. If we must give all stake holders equal voice on decisions, then we would need to (1) identify who the relevant stake holders are, and (2) create ad-hoc decision-making bodies to provide them with a forum to present their cases on equal footing.¹

Another explanation might also be at work. Citizens might simply be uninformed about the relative size of different racial and ethnic groups. The American public has been lambasted at times for its lack of knowledge about politics (Carpini and Keeter, 1997). To make matters worse, knowledge (or lack thereof) can shape outcomes by affecting policy preferences and voting behavior (Bartels, 1996; Althaus, 1998; Gilens, 2001). More pernicious still is the effect of misinformation. When people not only lack correct information but actively hold incorrect information, it can be a barrier to citizens' ability to update their preferences in light of new information (Kuklinski et al., 2003). As a result, if citizens are uninformed, or worse, misinformed about the actual size of groups in their community, they could base their representation preferences on false premises.

Are citizens able to accurately perceive the size of racial groups? And are

¹On this note, there has been a push among both scholars and practitioners to implement such institutions, generally in a deliberative setting (Fishkin, 1996; Hansen and Andersen, 2004; Fishkin and Luskin, 2005; Farrar et al., 2010). Mansbridge (1983) advocates for using deliberation to overcome some of the negative effects of what she dubs "adversarial" democracy, where sides are pitted against one another. Instead, under deliberative settings, stake holders can present their claims and be assured an equal voice (see Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). Examining deliberative democracy in detail is beyond the scope of the present work.

these perceptions more or less accurate for local communities? If citizens do misperceive their community's racial composition, does this in turn affect their representation preferences? This chapter examines these questions in greater detail. I begin by adding racial context to the previous analyses of treatment effects. The composition of subjects' communities could alter the nature of the treatment vignettes, so results from Chapters 3 and 4 are verified. I then turn to the question of perceptions: do citizens accurately perceive the racial composition of their communities, and do these perceptions matter for representation preferences?

5.1 The importance of context

Local racial context could have two important effects on my analyses. The first, mentioned above, is that perceptions of racial context could alter citizens' expectations about what representation should look like. I return to this point later. The second way context could affect my analyses is by changing the relative meaning of treatments regarding descriptive representation.

Because treatment vignettes were not conditioned on residential context,² all subjects were assigned to either 5% black, 15% black, or 50% black. But whether this composition was deemed fair or not might have to do with both the treatment condition itself and a given individual's community demographics. Someone living in a town that is only 5% black might prefer the

²Doing so would require a lookup in a database containing demographic information on communities and an associated set of treatment conditions to apply to subjects based on their communities' demographics. If a subject resides in a community that is 15% black, he might receive descriptive representation conditions of 0% black, 15% black, and 30% black. Another subject residing in a community that is 30% black might receive treatment conditions of 15% black, 30% black, and 45% black. While assigning treatment based on community demographics is theoretically possible, such complicated lookups and assignment conditions were not feasible with the commercial survey software used for this experiment.

low descriptive representation condition because that represents proportional representation for blacks. That same treatment condition would be well below proportional for someone living in a community that is 40% black.³

For this reason, it is important to verify the earlier findings by conditioning the treatment on the size of the black population in each subject's community. To do so, we need two key pieces of information. First, we need to know where each subject lives. Second, we need to know something about how that community is composed.

For the first point, subjects were asked to provide the 5-digit zip-code for their primary residency.⁴ Subjects were then matched with a "core based statistical area" as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Each CBSA refers to a single metropolitan or micropolitan area. Metropolitan areas are localities with a population of 50,000 or greater. Micropolitan areas are localities with between 10,000 and 50,000 persons. This definition of geographic location means that we will have to omit subjects residing in locations with fewer than 10,000 residents as well as any subject that did not enter a valid 5-digit zip-code. This results in the loss of 16 observations that did not have valid zip-codes that are part of a CBSA. It also bears mentioning that these CBSAs are metropolitan areas and not distinct political units. So, for example, the CBSA corresponding with Chicago would include the city itself as well as any suburbs. So if a respondent provided a zip-code associated with Oak Park, Illinois, they would be located within the Chicago CBSA⁵.

³However, Glaser (2003) provides evidence that preferences about racial policies may not be dependent on racial context in the ways one might think.

⁴Alternatively, subjects could be located based on the IP address. Because IP addresses are assigned to internet service providers, geographic location can usually be reliably determined based solely on IP address. However, this would only provide information on where the subject took the survey, and not where they actually live. For this reason, self reported zip-code is a better measure of where subjects actually live.

⁵This raises the additional question of whether this geographic unit of analysis is the appropriate one. People might have different perceptions of what the boundaries of their

After subjects were located within a CBSA, data on the CBSA’s racial composition was added to determine the percent black in the community. Data on these CBSA demographics can be found in Table 5.1. Based on the percent black, a new variable was created capturing whether the descriptive representation treatment was roughly proportional, above proportional, or below proportional. If subjects resided in a community that was 0-10% black, the low descriptive representation condition was recoded as proportional, and both the medium and high descriptive representation conditions were recoded as above proportional. If a subject resided in a CBSA that was 10-20% black, the medium descriptive representation condition was recoded as proportional, the low descriptive representation condition was recoded as below proportional, and the high descriptive representation condition was recoded as above proportional. Finally, if a subject resided in a CBSA that was over 20% black, the high descriptive representation condition was coded as proportional, and both the low and medium descriptive representation conditions were recoded as below proportional.⁶

The treatment distribution resulting from roughly recoding the treatment into below proportional, proportional, or above proportion is displayed below in Figure 5.1. This adjustment creates far more subjects who received treatments that were above proportional representation compared to those who simply received the “high” treatment condition. This recoding of treatment condition does not affect the substantive outcomes.

community actually are, in addition to their perceptions of the composition of people within those communities (Wong et al., 2012). Although the present study cannot identify what exactly subjects view as their community, the results presented below are robust whether CBSA or zip-codes are used as the unit of aggregation.

⁶A perhaps simpler test would simply be to add black percent or some other community demographic characteristic as a covariate. This is less rigorous, as it does not capture how treatment effects might differ based on the type of community, but doing so yields results substantively identical to those presented in previous chapters.

Table 5.1: Characteristics of observed communities

	Mean	S.D.	1st Qu.	Median	3rd Qu.
Percent white	77.7	11.6	68.3	79.9	86.3
Percent black	13.9	9.5	6.6	11.9	18.7
Percent Latino	13.7	12.6	4.7	9.3	21.1
Percent Asian	5.3	4.9	2.2	3.8	6.4
Total population	27217	17049	14149	27267	38440
Subjects resided in a total of 276 unique CBSAs. There are a total of 935 CBSAs in the United States and Puerto Rico as of 2010.					

Figure 5.1: Treatment conditions

		Descriptive representation		
		Below prop.	Proportional	Above prop.
Substantive outcome	Favored blacks	Treatment 1 N=127	Treatment 2 N=148	Treatment 3 N=199
	Favored whites	Treatment 4 N=121	Treatment 5 N=170	Treatment 6 N=178

Rerunning the analyses in Chapter 3, we get the results displayed below in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. For descriptive representation, it is still the case that below proportional and proportional representation are associated with lower levels of satisfaction and perceived fairness. For substantive representation, we still find outcomes favoring whites to be regarded much more negatively than outcomes favoring blacks. This effect is particularly strong among black subjects.

The results of the interactive model are not quite as strong once treatment has been conditioned on each subject’s community demographics. Table 5.4 shows the results from this model. All of the main effects and the interaction terms for treatment are in the expected direction, but the size and significance of the coefficients is less than those found in Chapter 4. This suggests that the central story might be correct, but the results are not quite as robust as the direct effects of either substantive or descriptive representation.

Table 5.2: Independent effects of descriptive representation

Variable	Community		Process		Composition	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.58	0.02	0.61	0.02	0.58	0.02
Below Proportional	-0.08	0.02	-0.12	0.02	-0.08	0.02
Proportional	-0.06	0.02	-0.09	0.02	-0.08	0.02
Black	-0.03	0.05	-0.07	0.05	-0.12	0.05
Black*Below Prop.	-0.11	0.08	-0.03	0.08	-0.03	0.08
Black*Proportional	-0.00	0.07	-0.05	0.08	0.05	0.08
Female	-0.00	0.02	-0.02	0.02	-0.01	0.02
PartyID	-0.06	0.04	-0.06	0.04	-0.13	0.04
Ideology	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.01

Table 5.3: Independent effects of substantive representation

Variable	Community		Process		Composition	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.58	0.02	0.59	0.02	0.56	0.02
Favors whites	-0.06	0.02	-0.09	0.02	-0.05	0.02
Black	0.03	0.04	-0.03	0.05	-0.00	0.05
Black*Favors whites	-0.18	0.06	-0.11	0.07	-0.22	0.07
Female	-0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.00	0.02
PartyID	-0.06	0.04	-0.06	0.04	-0.12	0.04
Ideology	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.01

What these analyses bring to light is that an ideal research design would block subjects based on community demographics and then assign levels of descriptive representation pertinent to that community. To do this, one could select communities in advance and survey just those residents. That would allow the greatest control over treatment conditions, because it would allow a finite number of treatment conditions to be designed before implementation.

A more complicated, yet possible, research design would entail asking subjects for their zip code at the beginning of the survey, and then developing treatments conditional on their response. Researchers could then program the survey to assign them treatments that are either proportional, above proportional (by some pre-define quantity), or below proportional (by some

Table 5.4: Interactive effects of representation

Variable	Community		Process		Composition	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.59	0.02	0.63	0.02	0.60	0.02
Below Proportional	-0.03	0.03	-0.07	0.03	-0.05	0.03
Proportional	0.00	0.03	-0.04	0.03	-0.05	0.03
Favors whites	-0.03	0.03	-0.08	0.03	-0.06	0.03
Below*Favors whites	-0.11	0.04	-0.06	0.04	-0.05	0.04
Prop.*Favors whites	-0.06	0.04	-0.00	0.04	0.01	0.04
Black	-0.04	0.03	-0.07	0.03	-0.10	0.03
Female	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.02
PartyID	-0.06	0.04	-0.06	0.04	-0.13	0.04
Ideology	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.01

pre-defined quantity).

5.2 Determinants of community perceptions

The second major issue posed by the influence of residential context has to do with ordinary citizens' shaky grasp of actual community demographics. As discussed above, the effect of treatment condition might vary as a function of subjects' actual community demographics. But treatment might also vary as a function of subjects' *perceived* community demographics.

The idea that people are poor judges of their surroundings is becoming more prevalent in the social science literature. Wong (2007) finds that both whites and blacks overestimate the size of the black population, both in the nation at-large and in their own community. People's perceptions of the communities in which they live could drive not only how they experience the treatments in this experiment, but also what their representation preferences are. If, for example, a white person living in a community that is 10% black incorrectly believes that the actual percentage black is close to 50%, then he might have very different perspectives on the proper amount of descriptive

and substantive representation. On the descriptive front, if he holds preferences for representatives who are a microcosm of the body politic, then he should want there to be near parity in the numbers of blacks and whites representing citizens' interests. Similarly, if blacks make up 50% of the population, then he should expect policy outcomes to go in favor of blacks with some regularity.

For this reason, it should be clear that perceptions of community demographics matter very much for representation preferences. But before we can investigate how these perceptions matter, we must have a sense of what these perceptions are. To this end, subjects were asked to give their best guess of what percent of their community⁷ is white, black, Latino, and Asian. For the present purposes, I shall restrict analyses to blacks and whites.

Figure 5.2 shows how blacks' and whites' perceptions vary as a function of actual community demographics. The x-axis displays the percent of the subject's CBSA that is black. The y-axis shows the percent of the subject's community that he perceives to be black. Because the highest observed black percent in the data is 48%, the x-axis only extends to 50% (halfway of the theoretical maximum domain). The points marked by an "x" represent black subjects; the points marked by an "o" represent white subjects. The black and grey lines show a fitted line regressing actual percent black on perceived percent black, for blacks and whites respectively.

Were subjects to perfectly perceive their community, then we should see the points hovering near the line $y = x$ (marked by a dashed line in Figure 5.2). Any points falling above this line are over-estimates of the black population. Any points falling below this line are under-estimates of the

⁷An open question is what to what geography subjects are referring when they talk about their community. As Wong et al. (2012) shows, not all citizens think alike when asked to define their neighborhood or community.

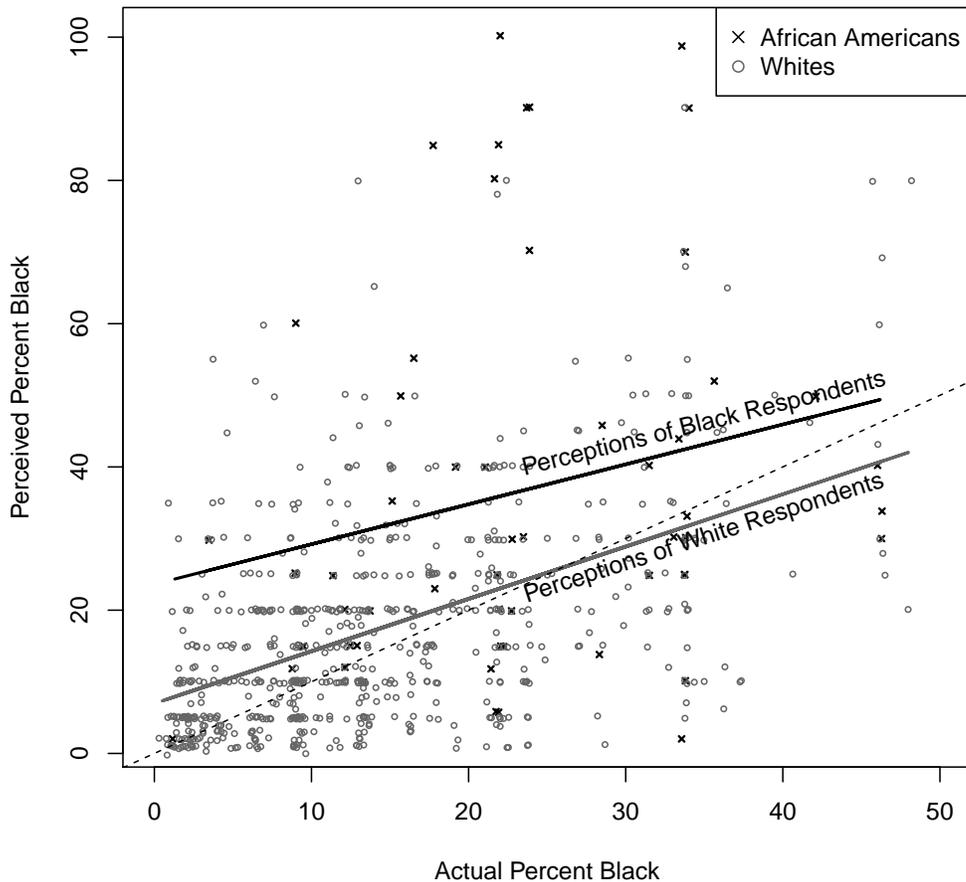


Figure 5.2: Actual and expected perceptions of community demographics

black population. A majority (58%) of subjects overestimated the percent black in their community. Although the mean percent black in communities was 13.8%, the mean percent black perceived by subjects was 18.0%. And when subjects overestimated the percent black, they tended to do it by large margins. The mean over-estimate was 12.3%, meaning a person who over-estimates the black percent in the community puts the percent black at almost double its actual size.⁸

⁸There are also a significant number of people who underestimate percent black. Those who under-estimated the percent black were off by an average of 7.4%.

5.2.1 Explaining innumeracy

What explains whites' and blacks' misinformation about their own community's demographics? Using the 1996 National Black Election Study, Tate (2004) finds that blacks' overestimates of the black population are associated with gender, education, income, political knowledge, geographic region (the South vs. non-South), and whether or not the respondent is represented by a black member of Congress. Similar analyses are presented below in Table 5.5. Because we are dealing with both black and white subjects, I also take into account the subject's race. And because there are both over- and underestimates, the dependent variable here is the absolute distance between a subject's perception of her community and reality.⁹

Table 5.5: Explanations of accuracy of racial perceptions

Variable	Coef.	Std. Error
Intercept	14.26	1.64
Black percent (actual)	0.28	0.03
Black	8.07	1.28
Female	1.79	0.66
Age	-0.06	0.03
PartyID	0.23	1.50
Ideology	-0.35	0.44
Knowledge	-8.36	1.59

The results of this model suggest that the black percent in the community, subject's race, gender, age, and their level of political knowledge are all explanations of accuracy of racial perceptions. As the percent black in a community increases, so does the inaccuracy of black percent.¹⁰ Black sub-

⁹An alternative measure could take into account the total percent black in a community by dividing this absolute distance by the actual percent black. Doing so would give a measure of how far off a subject's estimation is as a proportion of the total blacks. This would weight inaccuracy less heavily when black population sizes are large — missing by 5% should matter less when the total percent black is 40% than when it is 10%. This alternative construct yields substantively similar findings to those presented below.

¹⁰Although it should be noted that the raw size of the black population also increases, so the amount subjects miss by, proportional to black percent, actually decreases.

jects tend to be much more inaccurate in their estimates, off by an average of about 8 percentage points more than their white counterparts. Knowledge tends to have a strong negative effect on innumeracy of the black population. A person who answered all five knowledge items correctly would tend to be about 8 points more accurate than someone who answered none of the knowledge items correctly.

5.3 Innumeracy and evaluations of representation

Now that we have some sense of what drives innumeracy about the size of the black community, we can begin to investigate how this type of misinformation affects representation preferences. What effect might misinformation about a person's community have on evaluations of representation? Existing research has little information in this regard, but there are two potential ways in which misinformation might be consequential for representation preferences.

The first explanation is that perceptions of a community's demographics will set a baseline against which to compare descriptive representation. If a person believes that blacks make up 40% of the community, then they would see 40% black descriptive representation as proportional. If process preferences are based on proportionality, then this would lead over-estimates of percent black to warrant correspondingly higher desires for black descriptive representation. This could explain why both whites and blacks respond negatively even to levels of descriptive representation that are proportional to the U.S. and to the average community in my sample.

This explanation should be of particular importance to members of the minority. As Tate (2004) finds, blacks tend to grossly overestimate their own population size (as well as the number of black members of Congress, albeit

by much smaller margins). As a result, Tate suggests that a reason for limited effects for direct descriptive representation might be blacks' perceptions that they are grossly underrepresented in Congress. Although blacks are indeed underrepresented, at the time of Tate's study, this underrepresentation was by about 6 percentage points, not by the 27 percentage points perceived by black respondents.

A second explanation, in operation primarily for members of the majority, predicts that high perceptions of the percent black in a community should be related to lower levels of support for high descriptive representation (see Glaser, 2003). Blumer (1958)'s theory of racial group position suggests that as members of a dominant group feel that their position is threatened, they should react negatively to suppress the presumed threat. In the present context, high estimates of the percent black in the community should thus be related to higher levels of group threat. As a result of this higher group threat, we might expect white subjects to reject high levels of descriptive representation, as it poses a direct threat to their political authority.

5.3.1 Testing effects of perceptions

To begin to test the effects of context on representation preferences, I add to the previous models a variable capturing the subject's perceived racial context (percentage of their community that they estimate is black) as well as the subject's objective racial context (the actual percent black in the area in which they live). A simple model including each of these variables as a covariate is presented in Table 5.6.

The results of Table 5.6 suggest that neither objective nor subjective racial context play much of a role in shaping preferences for representation. The

Table 5.6: Racial context and direct representation preferences

Variable	Community		Process		Satisfaction	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.66	0.02	0.70	0.02	0.66	0.03
Low Descriptive	-0.06	0.03	-0.14	0.03	-0.10	0.03
Med Descriptive	-0.04	0.03	-0.08	0.03	-0.05	0.03
Favors whites	-0.01	0.03	-0.03	0.03	-0.03	0.03
Low*Favors whites	-0.10	0.04	-0.08	0.04	-0.06	0.04
Med*Favors whites	-0.10	0.04	-0.12	0.04	-0.06	0.04
Perceived pct black	-0.05	0.06	-0.08	0.06	-0.02	0.06
Actual pct black	-0.09	0.09	0.16	0.10	0.00	0.10
Black	-0.03	0.03	-0.09	0.03	-0.09	0.03

independent and joint treatment effects are similar to what was found in Chapter 4. Both objective and subjective racial context have insignificant effects on all three outcome variables. Moreover, the direction of effect is inconsistent across the three outcomes.

What’s more, this null finding is consistent across specifications. If we look at either aspect of representation in isolation, we find no situations in which either subjective or objective context has a significant impact on representation preferences.

Given the explanations laid out above, it is important to investigate context not only as a covariate, but also as a moderator of treatment. If racial threat is in operation, then we should see higher perceived percent black associated with lower support for black representation. Similarly, if people are basing their desire for high substantive representation on an overestimate of the size of the minority, then we should see perceived percent black have a negative effect on the coefficients attached to low or medium levels of descriptive representation.

For the sake of simplicity and brevity, I present below only the interaction results for descriptive representation. The results for substantive representa-

tion (and a model interacting the two) echo these findings. Table 5.7 shows the effect of perceived racial context on the treatment effects.

Table 5.7: Racial context and representation preferences

Variable	Community		Process		Satisfaction	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.64	0.02	0.67	0.02	0.63	0.03
Low Descriptive	-0.07	0.03	-0.14	0.03	-0.11	0.03
Med Descriptive	-0.09	0.03	-0.12	0.03	-0.06	0.03
Perceived pct black	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.10	0.08	0.10
Low*Perceived pct black	-0.25	0.13	-0.22	0.13	-0.14	0.14
Med*Perceived pct black	0.02	0.12	-0.08	0.12	-0.12	0.12
Actual pct black	-0.08	0.10	0.16	0.10	0.00	0.10
Black	-0.04	0.03	-0.10	0.03	-0.09	0.03

The results of these analyses suggest that perceived racial context has negligible effects on peoples' representation preferences. In the strongest case, going from the first to third quartile in perceived percent black (0.05 to 0.25) only decreases support for low descriptive representation by about 0.04, and has virtually no effect on support for medium or high levels of descriptive representation.

If we shift our focus to actual community context, the findings are similarly bleak. Regardless of whether we use reality or perceptions, a community's racial composition does not appear to moderate the effects of treatment. What this suggests is that people are not basing their evaluations of descriptive and substantive representation on the size of racial groups in their community.

This is troubling in many ways. If people have at least nominal support for the idea of proportional representation, then we should see either perceived or actual community demographics playing a factor in their support for different levels of descriptive representation. That we do not find this suggests that people are basing their evaluations of whether 10, 20, or 50 percent black

representation is fair on something independent from the size of the black population in their community.

This result also does not offer much support for the premise of group threat. Group threat would predict that as the size of the black population increases (or at least if it is perceived to do so), support for policies and representation favorable to blacks should decrease (Blumer, 1958; Bobo, 1983; Quillian, 1995). There is no evidence in the present study that representation preferences are based on group threat, either real or perceived.

We are left, then, with some lingering questions. Why is it that equal descriptive representation seems to be the condition to maximize satisfaction across groups, when blacks comprise nowhere near 50% of the population? And if representation preferences are independent of community demographics, what is driving differences in preferences? Might it be that differences in perceived national demographics are affecting people's judgments about local decision-making? I will withhold speculation on the first point. But the experiment does have some data that is suggestive of an answer for the second.

5.3.2 Representation preferences and ideology

What might explain the result of the highest levels of descriptive and substantive representation maximizing satisfaction across both blacks and whites? That blacks might prefer representational arrangements that maximize their influence is unsurprising. But the fact that these arrangements are also viewed most favorable by whites goes against expectations.

I offer one potential explanation for why we might see the greatest satisfaction among whites when black representation is highest: ideology. Thus

far in the analyses, I have not conditioned the experimental treatment on white subjects' ideology.¹¹ But in fact we might expect that liberal whites will indeed support high levels of descriptive and substantive representation for blacks, due to their higher levels of support for egalitarianism and racially-targeted policies. Conservatives, on the other hand, have tended to be linked to lower levels of support for such policies.¹² As such, we might expect that liberal whites will respond positively to treatment conditions affording blacks greater representation, whereas conservative whites will tend to respond negatively to those treatment conditions.

Table 5.8 shows the effects of descriptive and substantive representation treatment conditions by ideology for white subjects (there is too little ideological variation to conduct similar analyses for black subjects). As you can see, the results are striking. Those who self identify as more conservative are much more supportive of low levels of descriptive representation and substantive outcomes that favor whites.

The interaction between ideology and treatment condition is illustrated in Figures 5.3 and 5.4. For illustrative purposes, only the outcome variable directly measuring satisfaction with the group composition is displayed for each aspect of representation, although all three outcome variables show similar effects. The figures demonstrate how ideology alters white subjects' preferences for representation. Among liberals, satisfaction increases monotonically as black descriptive and substantive representation increase. For

¹¹Doing so for black subjects would accomplish little, given the substantial homogeneity within the MTurk sample and the population at-large.

¹²This touches on a related explanation — symbolic racism. A long-standing debate among scholars of race has been whether white attitudes towards race-based policies were the effect of ideology, racism, or a combination of both. These dimensions tend to be related, but there is no consensus on which is the primary motivator of white racial attitudes. Because I do not have a measure of racial prejudice or symbolic racism, I must remain agnostic on this point (cf. Kinder and Sears, 1981; Bobo, 1983; Feldman and Huddy, 2004).

Table 5.8: Moderating effects of ideology on descriptive and substantive representation

Variable	Descriptive representation		Substantive representation	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Intercept	0.63	0.03	0.63	0.02
Low Descriptive	-0.14	0.04		
Med Descriptive	-0.11	0.04		
Ideology	0.00	0.01	-0.02	0.01
Ideology*Low Descriptive	0.02	0.02		
Ideology*Med Descriptive	0.01	0.02		
Favors whites			-0.19	0.03
Ideology*Favors whites			0.08	0.02

conservatives, substantive outcomes that favor blacks are viewed as less satisfactory (and less fair) than outcomes favoring whites. And decision-making bodies that are composed of equal numbers of blacks and whites are viewed less favorably than groups in which blacks receive less descriptive representation.

5.4 Context, ideology, and the prospects for maximizing satisfaction

The lack of a relationship between either actual or perceived community demographics does not pose serious problems for the prospects of satisfying both whites and blacks in the abstract. It could be the case that people take their cues about how much representation groups in society should have from some broader phenomenon, such as the size of groups in the nation at-large or the relative socioeconomic status of groups.

From this lack of a contextual effect, the proscription for designing institutions should be clear. If we fully believe the experimental results presented in this project, then we should make efforts to enhance the descriptive represen-

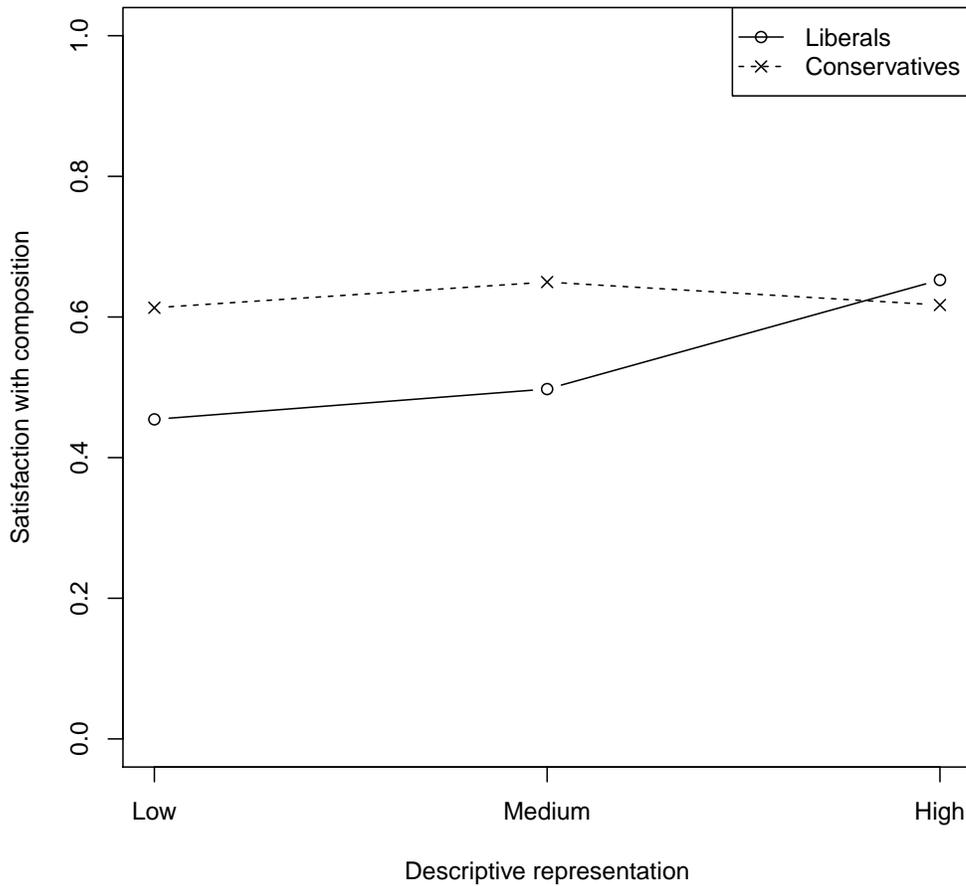


Figure 5.3: Moderating effect of ideology on descriptive representation

tation of minorities, even if that means boosting descriptive representation above what would be proportional in a given community.

But there is one major caveat that calls into question the ability of representation to satisfy all groups in society: ideology. Although the analyses presented in this chapter were exploratory, the indication is that there are deep differences in how liberals and conservatives view the fairness of decision-making processes contingent on their racial makeup and policy output.

Liberals appear willing, if not eager, to embrace high levels of descriptive

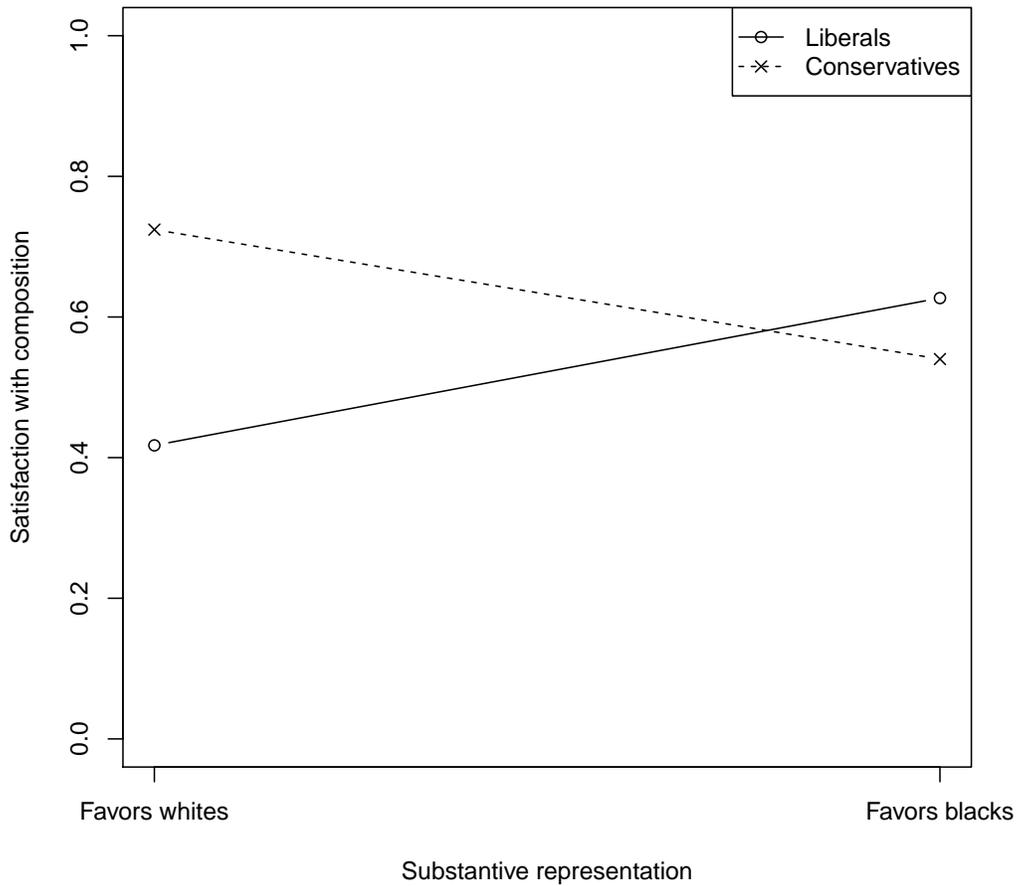


Figure 5.4: Moderating effect of ideology on substantive representation

representation for blacks. Achieving these high levels would satisfy liberals (who view such arrangements as the most fair), as well as blacks (who become indifferent to policy outcome when descriptive representation is high). But conservatives, on the other hand, seem to react quite negatively when descriptive representation reaches parity or outcomes favor a numerical minority group. As a result, efforts to boost descriptive representation for minorities might end up polarizing the white electorate.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This dissertation began with the example of racial violence in the 1960s. Although enhancing representation is no panacea for racial animus and tension, there is some evidence to suggest that heightening minority groups' representation (particularly descriptive representation) can help to address some of the endemic concerns of minority communities.

The preceding chapters explored how levels of descriptive and substantive representation affected ratings of fairness of and satisfaction with democratic decision-making. From this experiment, it appears as though representation preferences play an important role in shaping evaluations of government outcomes. Among minorities involved in this experiment, the results suggest that priorities tend to be placed on receiving high representation on decision-making bodies (in this case, 50% representation — above proportional in every community observed in the data set).

While no one would argue that having more black police in Oakland would have prevented the rise of violent black nationalism, the general findings regarding procedural justice and support for anti-system behavior do suggest that descriptive representation might matter. If descriptive representation is associated with higher levels of satisfaction with government, it also might be associated with higher perceptions of procedural justice and a higher willingness to accept the legitimate authority of democratic institutions.

The results of the experiment reported on above are suggestive of such

relationships, but we should be cautious in extrapolating too much from the study itself. What we can say is that there are clear direct and interactive effects of descriptive and substantive representation, and that these effects indicate that members of minority groups are indeed willing to make tradeoffs between aspects of representation.

6.1 Direct effects of representation

Chapter 3 presented results showing the direct effect of descriptive and substantive representation on evaluations of fairness and satisfaction with decision-making. All three outcome measures responded similarly to levels of descriptive and substantive representation.

For blacks, increases in black descriptive representation caused higher ratings of the fairness of the process, the fairness of decision-making to the whole community, and satisfaction with the composition of the committee. This was in line with *a priori* expectations. As either aspect of representation increases, we should see higher satisfaction with government.

A similar finding resulted for blacks and substantive representation. When the outcome favored the black neighborhood, blacks were significantly more positive about the decision-making process. The results for substantive and descriptive representation are supportive of Hypothesis 1.

What is interesting is that whites' evaluations were affected in a similar manner to the evaluations of blacks. Rather than higher black representation triggering a backlash, higher black representation appears to correspond to higher levels of satisfaction with the decision-making and perceptions of its fairness among whites.

This suggests that Hypothesis 4 is not supported. Not only are whites

not indifferent to level of descriptive representation, they appear to actively prefer higher black descriptive representation.

6.2 Tradeoffs between aspects of representation

An important point with respect to members of permanent minority groups is how they will (or will not) make tradeoffs between aspects of representation. Even though the direct effects suggest that the optimal configuration would be for high descriptive and substantive representation for minority groups, this obviously is untenable in any situations in which the majority and minority groups hold oppositional positions.

In cases where blacks and whites hold opposing views, it is important to know whether descriptive representation might actually compensate for policy losses. Although consistent policy failures might have some deleterious effects on blacks, evidence from this experiment suggest that, at least in a one-shot scenario, descriptive representation can compensate for policy failures.

This evidence is in line with what was expected by Hypotheses 2 and 3. If this compensatory effect of descriptive representation holds more generally, then designers of democratic institutions might have a means to address the persistently lower levels of engagement and trust among the minority community.

6.3 Future directions

Given the research findings above, there are a number of directions that future research could take. Three areas in particular warrant highlighting. The first is improving upon the data presented here. The second is investigating

different decision-making domains. The third is investigating how to attain high levels of descriptive representation.

On the first point, one of the limitations of the data analysis in this project has been the source of the data. Using MTurk as a data source could be seen as problematic for a number of reasons (the analyses of Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012) notwithstanding). Some have raised concerns about the generalizability of internet samples to begin with (e.g., Malhotra and Krosnick, 2007). Even if this is not a concern, there are some concerns with MTurk data in particular.

For the present purposes MTurk samples are not ideal due to their low numbers of black workers. MTurk samples tend to have only around 5% black according to Berinsky, Huber and Lenz (2012). The sample used here actually was somewhat higher than this mark. Still, the percent black in the sample used for the analyses here is a poor approximation of the national average (a problem commonly confronted by survey research that does not include an oversample of blacks).

To that end, it would be beneficial to re-run the analyses presented here on a nationally representative sample. This would accomplish two goals. First, it would boost the number of blacks in the sample and thereby increase our power in explaining how representation affects their ratings of fairness and satisfaction. Second, it would allow us to test the exploratory analyses in Chapter 5 in a more rigorous manner.

Fortunately, data collection of a national sample replicating the results presented here has already been completed. The treatment vignettes, outcome variables, and measures of perceived community demographics were placed on a wave of the 2012 CCAP election study. This study uses a national probability sample, and so should a far more representative sample of the

U.S. population than MTurk workers. Moreover, the increased length of the study allows for more potential explanatory variables. In sum, this source of data should greatly improve the generalizability of the results presented here.

A second potential expansion of this research could include investigating other issue domains. The issue investigated here was nonpartisan and locally focused. I argue that this was appropriate for the purposes of this study — identifying how people evaluate different aspects of representation — but it certainly is uncharacteristic of a great many issues in American politics.

Future studies could investigate the roles of descriptive and substantive representation when partisan cues are available. This has the potential for substantially changing the dynamics of aspects of representation. If exposed to a party cue, the salience of substantive outcomes might be far greater than observed under the present conditions. One could easily hypothesize that in a highly partisan decision, the importance of the substantive outcome would be far greater than when the decision is nominally non-partisan.

A third area of continuation from this research is how best to attain high levels of descriptive representation. The present study suggests that descriptive representation can compensate for unfavorable policy outcomes for blacks. As a result, democratic practitioners might seek to create institutions that afford minority groups a greater voice in the decision-making process, even if that does not translate into a greater likelihood of achieving those groups' preferred policies.

But an open question is how best to boost descriptive representation to the levels necessary to compensate for unfavorable policy outcomes. For example, if we were to set up deliberative institutions to bring in participants from the minority community, how could we best ensure that minorities would

participate at all? As Sanders (1997) argues, not all groups are equally equipped to participate in such scenarios. As a result, a large number of minorities might opt out of participating, hamstringing any efforts to boost descriptive representation. To this end, scholars could investigate how best to structure institutions such that high levels of descriptive representation result.

A final point worth mentioning is the question these results raise about the nature of substantive representation for members of the majority. The treatment vignettes used in this study were designed specifically to evoke a race-sensitive response. In the treatments, the outcome either favored a white neighborhood or a black neighborhood. The assumption implicit in this was that the outcome favoring the white neighborhood would be a favorable substantive outcome for whites and the converse would be true for blacks. But in actuality, whites seemed to prefer an outcome favoring the black neighborhood. This suggests that in the treatment, the outcome favored by whites was not the outcome that was more beneficial for their racial in-group.

Another way of stating this is that there seemed to be broad consensus about which policy outcome was preferred across both groups. For both blacks and whites, a decision to build a school in the black neighborhood elicited more favorable responses than the decision to build a school in a white neighborhood. As such, this might not be a critical test of tradeoffs between substantive and descriptive representation. Ideally, the policy decision would be such that blacks and whites differed in their preferred outcome. In such a situation, it would be much more telling if whites were still willing to cede representation to blacks.

There are a number of possible explanations for why there might have been

broad consensus on the preferred policy outcome. First, it might have been the case that most respondents were indifferent between the two outcomes. Since the vignette stated that both neighborhoods were equally deserving and needing of the school, it may have made determining a preferred outcome difficult for most respondents. Second, unmentioned concerns, such as socioeconomic status, might have been at play. If people extrapolated information about the neighborhoods based on their racial composition, then that information might have played the pivotal role. For example, if people perceive most black neighborhoods to be relatively poor and most white neighborhoods to be relatively well-off, then respondents might have preferred the outcome favorable to blacks because of their perceived worse socioeconomic status. Unfortunately, the present study does not allow us to adjudicate between these competing alternatives, and so it will fall on future work to investigate more fully the situations in which members of minority groups and the majority are willing to make hard tradeoffs between descriptive and substantive representation.

6.4 Representation and the prospects for maximizing satisfaction

Overall, this project has presented fairly optimistic findings for the prospects of maximizing satisfaction across groups in society. For both members of a minority group and the majority, decision-making situations that involve high levels of descriptive representation cause higher ratings of fairness and satisfaction.

What is important to note here is not only that blacks appear willing to make the trade substantive outcome for equal representation, but that whites

appear equally willing to accept such decision-making bodies. This suggests that there might not be significant backlash against institutions that contain equal numbers of blacks and whites.

This result appears to hold regardless of the type of community in which people live. The results presented here offer little support for racial context as a moderator of the effects of representation. For this reason, diverse decision-making bodies might be possible even in communities that are predominantly white.

One caveat to keep in mind, of course, is the exploratory finding regarding ideology. Although blacks and liberal whites appear to see eye-to-eye with regards to optimal levels of descriptive representation and policy outcomes, this is less true in the case of conservatives. For conservatives, there appears to be a significant backlash against decisions that favor blacks, and a less pronounced backlash to high levels of descriptive representation.

Because this result holds regardless of racial context, it suggests that some people might simply be ideologically opposed to boosting the representation of minorities. If this is the case, it might suggest that maximizing satisfaction across groups will be difficult, if it is even possible at all.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX

A.1 Survey instrument

A.1.1 Basic demographics

5-digit Zip Code for your primary residence

Age

Gender

What is your race or ethnicity? Check as many boxes as necessary
(order randomized)

- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black/African-American
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Native American/Alaska Native
- Other/Multi-racial
- Decline to respond

A.1.2 Partisanship and ideology

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a: (order randomized)

- Democrat
- Independent
- Republican
- Don't know

(If respondent identified with a party): Would you say you consider yourself to be a strong [Republican/Democrat] or not very strong?

- Strong
- Not very strong

(If respondent identified as an Independent): As an independent, would you say you tend to lean toward:

- Democrats
- Republicans
- Neither

Generally speaking, do you consider yourself a:

- Strong liberal
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative
- Strong conservative
- Don't know

A.1.3 Political interest and knowledge

Some people seem to follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, whether there's an election going on or not. Others aren't that interested. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?

- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Only now and then
- Hardly at all

How much do you know about politics relative to the average person?

- A great deal less
- Somewhat less
- About the same amount
- Somewhat more
- A great deal more

Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the House of Representatives in Washington? Democrats or Republicans?
(order randomized)

- Democrats
- Republicans

Whose responsibility is it to nominate judges to the Federal Courts?
(order randomized)

- President
- Congress
- Supreme Court

Which of the political parties is more conservative than the other at the national level, Democrats or Republicans? (order randomized)

- Democrats
- Republicans

How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto? (order randomized)

- Bare majority (50% + 1)
- Two-thirds majority
- Three-fourths majority

What is the main duty of the U.S. Congress (order randomized)

- To write legislation
- To administer the President's policies
- To supervise states' governments

A.1.4 Community demographics (order of questions randomized)

Just your best guess - what percentage of the population in your community is African American?

Just your best guess - what percentage of the population in your community is white?

Just your best guess - what percentage of the population in your community is Latino?

Just your best guess - what percentage of the population in your community is Asian American?

A.1.5 Treatment vignette

Suppose your community's local government has appointed a committee consisting of 20 registered voters from the community. The purpose of the committee is to recommend the location of a new school, which will replace an existing school. Chances are high that this is the last new school your community will be able to build in a long time.

The committee identified two equally deserving locations. Each of the locations badly needs a new school. They differ in that one of the locations is in a predominantly white neighborhood, the other location in a predominantly African-American neighborhood.

This committee consisting of [18/15/10] white members and [2/5/10] black members has been holding hearings through the community and just announced its decision: the new school will replace the old school in the [white/black] neighborhood.

A.1.6 Dependent variables (order of questions randomized)

Given this racial composition, how fair was this decision to all members of the community?

- Very fair
- Fair

- Neither fair nor unfair
- Unfair
- Very unfair

Given this racial composition how fair was this decision to whites?

- Very fair
- Fair
- Neither fair nor unfair
- Unfair
- Very unfair

Given this racial composition how fair was this decision to African Americans?

- Very fair
- Fair
- Neither fair nor unfair
- Unfair
- Very unfair

How fair was the decision-making process itself?

- Very fair
- Fair
- Neither fair nor unfair
- Unfair
- Very unfair

How satisfied would you be with a decision-making body in your community with this racial composition?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

A.2 Balance across treatments

A concern often raised with experiments is balance across treatment conditions. The challenge posed by imbalance is that observed treatment effects could be driven by there being more of a certain “type” of subject in one treatment condition than in another. For example, let’s assume that substantive representation actually has no effect, but that blacks simply tend to have lower satisfaction with government. If we happened to have substantially more blacks in the “Outcome favors whites” treatment condition, then we might conclude that substantive outcomes favoring whites decreases satisfaction, when in reality the difference was simply due to racial imbalance in random assignment.

Table A.1 shows the distribution across treatment conditions of a number of potential covariates that could influence experimental results. Since the total number of subjects is large, there is less of a concern with imbalance. And indeed, gender, race, partisanship, and ideology all appear to be balanced across treatment conditions. The results of χ^2 tests for these variables all fail to reject the null (p-values are 0.85, 0.76, 0.92, and 0.27 for gender,

race, party, and ideology, respectively). As such, we can be fairly confident that experimental results are not being driven by imbalance, at least on these observed characteristics.

Table A.1: Covariate balance across treatment conditions

	Outcome favors whites			Outcome favors blacks			N
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High	
Female	68	77	70	64	78	65	422
White	151	157	135	137	172	135	887
Black	16	13	12	8	15	15	79
Democrat	71	72	58	64	83	60	408
Republican	66	67	58	63	66	61	381
Liberal	79	85	62	84	98	81	489
Moderate	55	53	44	38	44	40	274
Conservative	29	30	35	22	38	24	178
Total N	167	170	146	145	185	148	961

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